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BY WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

HUMAN NATURE IN THE BIBLE

READING THE BIBLE

ESSAYS ON MODERN NOVELISTS

ESSAYS ON RUSSIAN NOVELISTS

ESSAYS ON MODERN DRAMATISTS

ESSAYS ON BOOKS

HOWELLS, JAMES, BRYANT, AND OTHER ESSAYS

THE ADVANCE OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

THE ADVANCE OF ENGLISH POETRY

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY THEATRE

ARCHIBALD MARSHALL

SOME MAKERS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

AS I LIKE IT, FIRST AND SECOND SERIES

TEACHING IN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

BROWNING: HOW TO KNOW HIM

HUMAN NATURE AND THE GOSPEL

236
P4

HUMAN NATURE AND THE GOSPEL

BY

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"There is only one other person I can ever think of after this," continued H(unt), but without mentioning a name that once put on a semblance of mortality. "If Shakespeare was to come into the room, we should all rise up to meet him; but if that person was to come into it, we should all fall down and try to kiss the hem of his garment!"

—William Hazlitt, *Of Persons One Would Wish To Have Seen.*

PREFACE

Three years ago I wrote a book called *Human Nature in the Bible.* Taking the Authorised Version of the Old Testament as a masterpiece of literature, I undertook to consider it as a revelation of human nature, in the sublimity, baseness, wisdom, folly, courage, cowardice, tragedy, comedy, normalcy, and whimsicality that have ever been characteristic of men and women. I considered separate portions of the Old Testament as illustrations of poetry and prose, and certain characters in both high and lowly life as significant representatives of humanity. I could add nothing to the scholarly commentaries on the text of the Old Testament, not having the necessary knowledge and not being primarily interested. But it was my hope that those who saw what I wrote would be led to a closer, more frequent, and more intelligent reading of the literature from Genesis to Malachi.

Now I have set for myself a more difficult yet more important task. My purpose is to write on the books of the New Testament in the same manner in which I treated those of the Old. But in addition to interpreting the characters of the men and women who fill its chapters, to pointing out the incomparable literary beauty of certain passages, to comment-

ing on the dramatic portions of the narrative, there is presented in the New Testament a unique Personality, who is mentioned on practically every page of the Gospels, Acts, Letters, and Apocalypse, and whose appearance on earth is the leading fact in the history of the universe.

In the presence of the Light of the world all other lights are dim, and it is impossible to consider the New Testament merely as a literary work. It is assuredly the literary masterpiece of all time, as superior to Shakespeare, Homer, Goethe, Dante, Tolstoi as they are superior to the commonplace; but it is essentially a spiritual book, and cannot be understood at all unless there is some spiritual capacity in the reader's heart and mind. When Browning's *Ring and the Book* was published, a contemporary review called it the most precious and profound spiritual treasure that had appeared since Shakespeare; no literary critical faculty, however acute or discerning, could form a proper estimate of it without spiritual insight. What is true of Browning's poetry is supremely true of the New Testament.

I shall therefore attempt to set forth and emphasise what I believe to be the essence of Christianity as taught by its Founder; for I believe in him as the Divine Revelation, as the Teacher who knew more about humanity than any poet, novelist, scientist, philosopher, or dramatist. I believe that he is the one hope of mankind, and that his way of life is not only the wisest, but the only way that

can bring nobility and happiness to the individual and security and peace to the world. And I am just as certain of his ultimate triumph on earth as I am that I shall not be here to see it.

I do not know who wrote all the books in the New Testament; I do not know, nor does anybody else, in what order they were written; I do not know whether the Fourth Gospel was originally written in Aramaic or in Greek, or whether its author had a copy of Mark's Gospel in front of him as he wrote. I do not know what passages, if any, are "corrupt"; these are important questions in scholarship, and no one is entitled even to an opinion, much less to the publication of it, unless he has spent years of assiduous research on these problems; but while I respect and honour (and envy) all serious and honest investigating scholars, I know that none of the questions of which they treat is so important as the fact—fortunate for humanity—that we have in the New Testament as it stands a record of the life and teachings of the most interesting person in history, written in language that can be understood by a child; which is indeed often better understood by children than by the wise and prudent, especially by the prudent.

Botany is not so important as flowers; grammar is not so important as literature; geology is not so important as mountains; man's origin is not so important as man's opportunity (here we are anyhow); the origin of any masterpiece is not so important as the masterpiece.

I therefore in this respect follow the method I used in the consideration of the Old Testament; I take the Authorised English Version of the New Testament, and comment on those passages that seem to me most significant.

Among all the books which have helped me, I wish to make especial mention of *New Testament History* (1922), by Doctor G. W. Wade.

W. L. P.

CONTENTS

		Page
I.	The First Christmas	1
II.	John the Baptist and the Triple Temptation	23
III.	Prayer and Miracles	47
IV.	The Pessimism of Jesus	81
V.	The Betrayal, the Death, the Resurrection	107
VI.	The Law and the Gospel	133
VII.	The Beginnings of the Christian Organisation	159
VIII.	Peter and Paul	181
IX.	The Rising Tide	205
X.	Paul's Adventures in Europe and Asia	231
XI.	The Conquering Captive	259
XII.	Love-Letters and Romance	281

I

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

College Undergraduates and Sequels—The Best Seller—Jesus the Supreme Literary Artist—Good News—Phillips Brooks and Christina Rossetti—The Pope and the Planet—The Psychological Moment—The World Played Out—Doctor Luke and Theophilus—Physicians and Culture—Luke's Literary Style—Fathers and Sons—The Younger Generation—The Annunciation—The Virgin Birth—Two Happy Mothers—The Birth in the Stable—The Weather—Snow—The Light in the Sky—The Conditions of Peace—The Sheep and the Lamb—The First Evangelists—The Wise Men and Their Gifts—More Practical Gifts—Simeon and His Song of Farewell—The Flight into Egypt—The Murderer Herod—Joy and Tragedy—Jesus of Nazareth—The Doctors and the Child——The Long Years of Obscurity—The Absence of Humility in Jesus—Not a Perfect Man—The Divine Saviour.

I

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

One day I was talking with some of my undergraduate pupils about sequels. I remarked that as a rule sequels to works of literature are inferior to the original books. As one of the most notable exceptions to the general rule I mentioned *Twenty Years After,* by Dumas; and then invited the students to suggest others. Several suggestions were made, which alas, I have forgotten; for as pupils will often forget what their teacher has told them, the reverse is also true; but one young man enquired, How about the New Testament?

It was well said. This sequel is unquestionably greater; greater from every point of view. No other book has made such an impression on the world. When the Revised Version was published in 1881, its appearance had been looked for with feverish excitement. The bookshops could not begin to satisfy the demand. Thousands of copies were pushed about the streets of New York, and sold directly from wheelbarrows; the *Herald* printed the entire work in a Sunday issue. The Protagonist in the New Testament is today the most

interesting character known to humanity. Of all books, the New Testament is the best seller, in spite of the fact that it can usually be had for the asking.

Jesus is as supreme in literary art as he is in ethics. The short stories from his lips in the Gospels are superior to anything written by Guy de Maupassant, Bret Harte, Rudyard Kipling, Hawthorne, or O. Henry. The narrative style of the four evangelists has the dignity of simplicity; the letters of Paul, James and John are better illustrations of epistolary skill than anything to be found in Horace Walpole, Thomas Gray or William Cowper. Mystical beauty in language has never reached such an altitude as in the Fourth Gospel and in the Revelation.

In addition to being itself the pinnacle of literature, the New Testament has been the inspiration of sublime masterpieces in other forms of art—in architecture, painting, and music. One need only call to mind the mediaeval Gothic cathedrals, the paintings of Raphael, Lionardo, Andrea del Sarto, Michael Angelo, Correggio, Murillo, Handel's *Messiah* and Wagner's *Parsifal.* Out of that slender volume flowed a creative impulse the effect of which can hardly be exaggerated.

The recorded sayings of Jesus can be read in three hours, but it will take more than three thousand years to realise their import.

The word Gospel means good news; Christmas is the merriest day in the year, because the best news

ever received by the world came on that day. As pessimism continues to be rejected by an adverse majority vote in the custom of congratulating individuals on their birthdays, so the birthday of Jesus Christ is fittingly celebrated by universal rejoicing and family jollity. In a world whose history is darkened by sorrow and tragedy, the Light entered with the birth of Christ.

Phillips Brooks is more generally known as a preacher than as a poet; but one poem from him will outlast most of the work done by professional poets who were his contemporaries, and all of his own eloquent sermons, because in a few harmonious words he expressed the significance of Christmas.

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

The old Pope in Browning's poem meditates on the strange fact that out of all the mighty stars of the Universe our little Earth was chosen for the stage and scene of the greatest drama in history. But it is not so strange when we reflect on the differences between life and art. In the dramas and operas written by man, a huge play requires a huge stage; one could not mount Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* on

a small platform. But in life it is quite otherwise; every lonely farmhouse, every commonplace flat in a monotonous city block has served as a stage whereon the mightiest human dramas are enacted, made up of love, ambition, jealousy, revenge, self-sacrifice, remorse and death. In human affairs size has nothing to do with significance; as Greece has contributed more to the thought of the world than Siberia, so our Earth was selected for the divine drama where the Protagonist was the Son of God.

As the Earth is a little planet, so Palestine is a little country, about 160 miles north and south, and 80 miles east and west, with mountains and deserts on three sides, and on the other an inhospitable stretch of sea. Yet this detached corner of the world became the Holy Land.

The gospel of Christ is always needed; is needed now and everywhere; but perhaps there never had been a time in human history when it had been more needed than when it appeared. The Roman Empire had the seeds of death in it and had failed in its attempt to police the world; the Roman religion was played out and the best men were sceptics, as ought always to be the case when religion is not a truly elevating force. The mightiest mind in Roman literature, Lucretius, combined in his masterpiece, *On the Nature of Things,* an honest scientific method with consummate poetic art. It is as though Darwin had written *The Origin of Species* in the literary style of *Paradise Lost.*

If one wishes to realise what the highest culture can do for mankind without faith, let one read Browning's *Cleon,* where the speaker sums up the intellectual contributions of antiquity, with the conclusion that beasts are better off than self-conscious man.

> And I have written three books on the soul,
> Proving absurd all written hitherto,
> And bringing us to ignorance again.

General scepticism in religion was followed, as it always has been, by scepticism in morals. Political life was currupt, and social life unspeakable. Ideals followed the gods into the twilight. In this weary and degenerate age, Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem.

Luke was a physician; his narrative contains more details than any of the other three evangelists, and he gives the important facts immediately preceding the birth of our Lord, with a preface written in a practical style, containing no superfluous word. He dedicates the work—as he later did the Acts of the Apostles—to his friend Theophilus. This gentleman was of noble rank, as is indicated by the expression "most excellent," not referring to his character, but to his position, like "Your excellency." Theophilus was evidently familiar with Christian teaching, but it is not certain that he had as yet identified himself with the believers. He had at any rate been suitably

named, for Theophilus means one who loves or is loved by God.

Doctor Luke was a Gentile, and an intimate friend of Paul, who speaks of him affectionately in Colossians. He accompanied Paul on some of his missionary journeys, and fortunately kept a diary. He eventually assisted in the spread of Christian propaganda, and no doubt gave professional assistance to the apostle. Some say that he finally became Bishop of Alexandria. He was a clear-minded man, as all physicians should be, and an absolute master of prose narrative style.

Philip Gilbert Hamerton, in his stimulating book, *The Intellectual Life,* said that of the three learned professions, the physician's was the best adapted for the cultivation of the mind. Admirable doctors who have illustrated the union of science and literature, are Sir Thomas Browne, Sir William Osler, Robert Bridges, Anton Chekhov, Arthur Schnitzler, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Weir Mitchell. None of them, however, succeeded in writing anything comparable to the parable of the Prodigal Son.

While there seems to be a difference of opinion among scholars as to the evidences of medical training in Luke's style, it is true that he wrote like a physician and "like a gentleman." Dr. G. W. Wade, whose work on New Testament History is a model, quaintly calls attention to the fact that Luke is the only evangelist who gives the quotation, *Physician, heal thyself.*

Dr. T. R. Glover, the Public Orator of Cambridge University, in commenting on J. H. Moulton, H. J. Cadbury, and other scholars who have investigated the language of the New Testament, believes that Luke's alterations of Mark's way of writing were both deliberate and significant. Luke had the sense of fact so characteristic of scientific men. Apparently he disliked exaggeration. He leaves out the adjective in the great story, the great calm, and the great herd of swine. He disliked foreign words, and preferred ones in Greek. Dr. Glover believes that Luke was a highly cultivated man, who intellectually belonged more to the circle of Greek culture around the Mediterranean rather than to the isolated life of Palestine, and in writing he had in mind the cultivated society of the world. He sums up: "Luke's Gospel is the gospel for humanity, the Gospel of Jesus' prayer, the Gospel of women."

Luke begins the story by telling us of a priest named Zacharias, and his wife Elizabeth. They were an old couple, and when he was informed that his wife would bear a child, he did not, like Abraham in a similar situation, burst out laughing, but was filled with perplexity.

It cannot be too strongly stressed that the New Testament, with all its tragedy, is a book of joy, cheerfulness, and delight; it is significant that when the angel announced to Zacharias that he was to have a son, the news was accompanied with this statement:

And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

The normal father is happier at his son's success than at his own; nothing could more have pleased the old priest than to be told that his son John would be a modern prophet, analogous in his power and influence to Elijah of old; he would prepare the way for the Kingdom of God. There is one particularly interesting phrase in this angelic communication: "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children." One would naturally think that the prophecy would be the other way round. Have not most fathers regretted the tendencies manifest in their children and endeavoured to bring their offspring to their own point of view? But upon a little reflexion, is it not true that one reason for the melancholy quarrel that has ever existed between the younger and the older generation lies in the inability of parents to really understand the nature of the offspring that they have brought into the world? And would not both fathers and children gain if the former could show their love as much by sympathetic understanding as by caresses? At all events in the case of John the Baptist, the prime need of regeneration seemed to be expressed in the necessity of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children. Perhaps if this text were emphasised more often today, we should hear less about the terrible younger generation.

Zacharias, like Abraham, Gideon, and many other

Bible characters, did not believe the divine message, and demanded proof. He was accordingly stricken dumb, perhaps to prevent his saying something that he would afterwards regret.

After six months the same angel Gabriel who had brought the news to Zacharias was sent to Nazareth in Galilee, where lived Mary, a virgin who was betrothed to Joseph. The Annunciation is one of the most thrilling moments in New Testament history, and has been a favourite theme in pictorial art.

The angel saluted her as one highly favoured by God. Being too bewildered to speak she said nothing. What more eloquent than the silences of Mary? Then came the marvellous tidings that she was to be the mother of One whose kingdom should have no end. His name will be Jesus, which means Saviour. Mary was amazed, and in response to her natural enquiry, she was informed that she would be overshadowed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Her reply to this astounding statement is exceedingly beautiful. Instead of showing scepticism or demanding evidence, she answered softly, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

The whole question of the Virgin Birth of Jesus need not afflict the average man. If Jesus is unique, unlike any other person, it is not illogical to believe that his birth was unique; but if Jesus was simply a good man, then the Christian religion—as a religion—loses its foundation. In the presence of the

Supreme Miracle of the Incarnation, other miracles are of minor importance.

The subsequent meeting between Mary and Elizabeth is both charming and sublime. It was charming as all conversations between mothers should be; it was sublime, for Elizabeth was to give birth to John the Baptist, and Mary to the Son of God. Elizabeth had not the faintest trace of jealousy; she felt exalted by the honour of Mary's visit. Mary replied to her friend's generous salutation with a magnificent song of praise to God—to Him who regards no human distinctions of rank and riches, but looks into the heart alone.

We learn only from Matthew of Joseph's distress and misunderstanding. He had no thought of hatred or revenge, but he planned to separate himself from the woman he had loved. In a dream he received the truth.

About this time the Roman Emperor sent out a decree that a census should be taken of the population of the world. Everyone must be enrolled in his own town. Joseph therefore went south from Galilee to Judaea, to the city of Bethlehem, because he was of the lineage of King David; he took his wife Mary with him. They were unable to find quarters in the hotel, and had to go into the stable. There she gave birth to Jesus.

Christina Rossetti's *Christmas Carol* is a beautiful commemoration:

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain:
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign.
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and Seraphim
Thronged the air,
But only His mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped her Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,—
Yet what I can give Him,
Give my heart.

Milton in his *Ode on the Nativity,* Christina Rossetti, and many other poets, represent the weather as similar to that in higher latitudes, bitter cold with deep snow on the ground; they were thinking of an English Christmas. But Luke, the only evangelist who tells the beautiful story of the shepherds, represents them as in the fields keeping watch

over their flocks by night. The evening must therefore have been mild, as it often is even in winter in Palestine.

Snow storms, however, are not unknown; the book of Chronicles records the feat of Benaiah, who slew a lion on a snowy day. Snow is mentioned sufficiently often in the Old Testament to prove that it was a familiar spectacle. But Jesus, though he made constant references to natural phenomena, like rain, never alluded to snow; the word *snow* occurs only three times in the New Testament, and then only as a figure of speech.

The drowsy shepherds were startled by a great light; their fears were calmed by a divine voice, announcing joyful tidings to all people. Christianity was to become a universal religion; and indeed, it has no exclusive reference to young or old, rich or poor, black or white, nor has it anything to do either with climate or with nationality. Unlike some other religions, it is as practicable in the north as in the south; in the Orient as in the Occident; it is simple enough for children and the illiterate, and can never be outgrown by the most advanced or sophisticated mind. It is adapted to the needs of every person in the world, and no one who sincerely practices it has ever failed to improve.

The bright light aloft was accompanied by a swelling chorus of angelic music, singing "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men." A closer translation of this last phrase reads,

"on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased." The Advent of the Saviour brought the secret of social and international peace; but neither men nor nations can live at peace with one another until they bring themselves into harmony with the will of God. This is the reason that after nineteen hundred years of Christian teaching, the habit of war still prevails. It will in all probability continue to prevail for centuries to come, because it cannot be abolished by legislation, science, education, culture, or philosophy. Before there can be a change of policy, there must be a change of heart. Nations as well as men must be born again. I am certain that eventually war will become an anachronism, but there will not be peace in our time.

In 1924 the world is an armed camp. National motives are far indeed from Christianity. Acts follow intentions, as effects follow causes. But that it is possible for two nations to dwell side by side without a single military gesture, is proved by the boundary line between the United States and Canada. Nothing is more practical than Christianity, as will be discovered whenever the experiment is tried.

The shepherds left their sheep to behold the Lamb of God. They "went in haste," and found the baby in the manger. They told the happy mother of the celestial vision. She characteristically said nothing, but remembered every word, and kept it in the sanctuary of her heart. The shepherds, however, went out and spread the good news, thus becoming

the first Christian evangelists, as fishers were the first Christian disciples; indicating the dominion of Jesus over land and sea.

Matthew alone tells us of the visit of the foreign wise men. Tradition calls them three kings, but there is no mention in the Gospel of their royal rank. They had seen the Star in their eastern sky; they visited the holy child in Bethlehem, and fell down and worshipped him. Thus at the very beginning he received the homage of rustics and of learned philosophers. They gave him gold, and frankincense, and myrrh; but I like better the gifts presented by the three shepherds in the mediaeval plays. The realism of those crude but vital dramas required that the three shepherds should give Jesus things that would please a little child. After saluting him in the manner of rough herdsmen, "Hail! little tiny mop! A bird have I brought to my bairn. Hail! sweet is thy face. My heart would bleed to see thee here in such shabby clothes with no money." They brought him a tennis ball, a cluster of cherries, a little spruce box, a bottle, a tin bell, two nuts on a ribbon, a horn spoon, a shepherd's pipe, a pair of mittens, and a cap. They had babies themselves.

Joseph and Mary were Jews; and the rites of the Jewish law were strictly followed for the purification of the mother and for the circumcision of the child. His prenatal name Jesus was now formally given him. They brought him to the temple in Jerusalem, and offered the customary sacrifice.

Only from Luke we learn about Simeon. He was an old man living in the holy city. He was both just and devout, a good citizen and deeply religious; he was looking every day for the coming of the Messiah, and had an intuition that he should not die unsatisfied. In the temple he took Jesus in his arms, and in a rapture chanted the *Nunc Dimittis*:

> Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
> For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
> Which thou has prepared before the face of all people:
> A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Salvation to the Gentiles came from the greatest of the Jews; no other people has made such a contribution to civilisation.

The flight into Egypt is mentioned only by Matthew. Joseph was warned in a dream of the murderous intention of King Herod, and commanded to take mother and child away into Egypt. Thus, as Moses and the children of Israel sought safety by fleeing from Egypt to Palestine, so the Child of Israel returned to the old home finding freedom where his ancestors had found slavery. It was a journey of only about seventy miles. The three started in the night, and no incidents of the flight are reported.

Meanwhile, Herod, in the endeavour to make sure of the death of Jesus, ordered the murder of every male child of two years and under, in Bethle-

hem and its environs, which horrible sentence was carried out. Thus the birth of Christ caused the death of many children. The greatest joy was accompanied by the most bitter lamentation. The pall of tragedy hung over the life of Jesus from the beginning, and in the end Mary was to suffer more sharply than any of the young mothers of Bethlehem.

There is no record of any hostility felt toward the Divine Infant or toward Joseph and Mary because of the horror brought upon the land of his birth. Yet Herod's "trouble" was shared by all Jerusalem, and eventually they obtained their revenge. Among the Jews who clamoured for Christ's crucifixion, there may have been parents who remembered what had happened some thirty years before. It is interesting, too, to observe that there was no rebellion, no uprising against the cruel royal decree; submission to irresponsible tyranny is characteristic of humanity.

Kings are fortunately mortal, and when Herod was dead, and Joseph received the good news in a dream (for it is sometimes as pleasant to hear of the death of a king as of the birth of a child), the three returned to Palestine. Hearing that Herod's son had succeeded to his father, Joseph did not go to Jerusalem, but turned aside into the region of Galilee, taking up his residence in Nazareth. Hence the universally known expression, *Jesus of Nazareth.*

Only Luke tells us of the incident that happened

in the temple when Jesus was twelve years old. The child had grown rapidly; his body was tall, strong, and active, his mind precocious, not in clever sayings, but in mature wisdom; and his spirit reflected the grace of God. It is clear from his subsequent teachings that he had been thoroughly instructed both in the Mosaic law and in the other books of the Old Testament. In the spring of the year Joseph and Mary made their annual visit to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. The family remained in the holy city the requisite time. In returning northward they must have travelled with a large number of kinsfolk and friends, for they had gone a whole day's journey, without discovering the child's absence. This incident shows how independent and trustworthy he had become; he was evidently allowed to go whither he pleased. But at the end of the first day he was nowhere to be found; his distracted parents turned back, searching carefully all along the road they had travelled, then in the outskirts of the city and finally in the various streets. It did not at first occur to them to look in the temple. But on the third day they found him there surrounded with the professional students of the law, gravely listening to them and asking questions. The conversation was conducted on both sides as between equals; whatever condescension existed at the start quickly gave way to respect. The doctors were as much astonished at the knowledge revealed by the questions as by the extraordinary intelligence of his answers to

theirs. The mother, however, saw only the lost boy: and hurrying to him she asked with tender, maternal reproach why he had treated his parents with such indifference. "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Jesus answered filially, but positively that all the time he had been with his Father; they should have known that he was in his Father's house. They did not understand his reply; being too full of happiness to understand anything except his presence.

He immediately joined them, went with them back to the home in Nazareth, and acted as an obedient child. His mother treasured all his sayings in her heart. I wish she had written a fifth gospel. He developed steadily in body and mind and was beloved by God and man. From the very beginning Jesus never lacked friends.

This incident in Luke is the only fact recorded of the boyhood of Jesus, and nothing whatever is known of him from the age of twelve to the age of thirty. Joseph was a carpenter and he probably worked at that occupation. Yet it is strange that our information is so scanty. The person who was to exercise such an influence that even those who in the twentieth century write against him must date their books and articles from his birth, lived in complete obscurity from twelve to thirty, and then survived only three years. The preparation for his life of public service was ten times longer than his career. There is

a lesson in this for those whose ambition exceeds their patience.

We know in what a fever Paracelsus regarded the necessary interval between his dream and its realisation. Jesus worked quietly and tranquilly at his trade, thinking deeply of his mission, serenely abiding his time. It is interesting that the most famous man in the world should have waited so long.

The confident answer that he made to the disquietude of Joseph and Mary in the temple prepares us for the authority of his later teaching. The child was father of the man. It is strange that the humility of Jesus has been so falsely emphasised. Benjamin Franklin, in his resolution on Humility, wrote down the words "Imitate Jesus and Socrates." As a matter of fact, there has never existed an individual less humble than Jesus Christ. His blessings on his disciples, his condemnations of prominent men of the world, his promulgation of his own teaching, his manner, voice, and bearing were full of kingly authority. He invariably acted in the awareness of his supremacy over predecessors, contemporaries, and posterity.

It is therefore absurd for those who deny the divinity of Christ, to call him a perfect man. Either his assumption of authority came from his union with God, or he was the most conceited of human beings. Modesty is one of the finest manly attributes; a man cannot be perfect, cannot even be called very good, who lacks modesty, who takes

himself too seriously. If Jesus were only a man, he lacked one of the cardinal virtues and was marked by a fault peculiarly offensive. But the angels and the shepherds and the wise men who celebrated the first Christmas, they knew who he was. Kneeling before the manger at Bethlehem they worshipped the Divine Saviour.

II

JOHN THE BAPTIST
AND
THE TRIPLE TEMPTATION

The Appearance of John the Baptist—A Link Between the Old and the New Testament—A Reincarnation of Elijah—Eating Locusts in 1923—Popularity of the Scourge—The Necessity of Repentance—Sonnet by William Drummond—What Shall We Do?—Immersion in Water—The Arrest and Imprisonment—The Despair of John—The Reply by Jesus—The Greatest and the Least—Herod and John—The Feast and the Dance—The Horrible Gift—Salome in Literature—The Baptism of Jesus—The Approving Voice—The Long Fast—The Triple Temptation—The Book of Deuteronomy—John Milton and Paradise Regained—The Appearance of Satan—The First Two Disciples—The Virility of Jesus—The Fishermen—First Sermon by Jesus—The Platform of Christianity—The Most Important Statement in the World—The Angry Mob—Physician and Remedy.

II

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE TRIPLE TEMPTATION

All four evangelists speak of the work of John the Baptist, and Mark opens with it, though he does not give details of his teaching. We know even less of John's boyhood than of his Master's; we have neither incidents nor anecdotes; when we first see him, he is in full activity. In many ways, John seems, both in appearance and in temperament, anachronistic, belonging to the Old Testament regime. He is really the link between the old order and the new. He was the prophet of the imminent Messiah, but in clothing and in character he was a follower of the formidable Elijah. Both prophets and disciples are often more severe and less tolerant than their leaders. John was a lonely, hairy man, as wild as Ishmael; he lived in the solitude of the desert, he was dressed in a garment of camel's hair, with a leather girdle around him, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

With reference to the eating of locusts, which

has troubled some modern readers, it should be remembered that they made up in number what they lacked in size. Locust eating is common in the Philippine Islands today, and it is an interesting commentary on the story of John, that in the year 1923, the Bureau of Agriculture of the Philippines issued a special bulletin, giving various recipes for cooking locusts. There had been a plague of locusts, and it was characteristic of human ingenuity to turn this curse into a means of life. Directions are given for frying them, drying them, and for preparing them with chopped pineapple like a salad, and with sliced tomatoes like a club sandwich.

As so often happens with ascetics, the lack of rich food increased John's spiritual vitality. So abnormal an existence, such solitude in bleak and austere surroundings, fed the flame of his spirit. . . . At what year he entered the desert and how long he stayed there we do not know, but he emerged at the right moment.

As Jesus was the incarnation of divine love, John seemed like a reincarnation of Elijah. The world has usually listened to prophets, for society finds a certain fascination in being scourged. Sophisticated circles are accustomed to flattery, courtesy, conventional speeches and accompanying amenities; hence bold and uncompromising denunciations have the titillating tonic of a new sensation. In accordance with the law of human nature, society quickly tires of this as of everything else; and if the prophet

outlasts his welcome, as he generally does, he must be prepared to share the fate of Socrates, Savonarola, and John.

Tiberius had succeeded Augustus on the imperial throne A. D. 14, and it was in the fifteenth year of his reign, when Pontius Pilate was Roman governor of Judaea, Herod Tetrarch of Galilee, and Caiphas and his father-in-law Annas, high priests, that John, alone in the savage and desolate country, felt a sudden impulse to preach the word of God. The history of the conquest of Canaan repeated itself; for John made his invasion near the place where the Children of Israel first entered the Promised Land, by the Jordan in the vicinity of Jericho. Before Jesus could proclaim the general amnesty of the divine love, it was necessary that the people should be under conviction of sin. This was the task of John; he entered upon it with an energy as fierce as the wilderness whence he came. Like his Master, he was not a political reformer; he came not to save Israel from Rome, but to save individuals from themselves. He cried, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He put the first thing first; of what use is it to attempt to improve unless one feels conscious of the need?

He quoted from the prophet Isaiah,

> Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
> Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.

There must be a complete revolution in the minds of men, a change in values and in emphasis.

In a sonnet written three hundred years ago, William Drummond of Hawthornden represents John as proclaiming the word of God as soon as he felt the inspiration in his rocky solitude.

> The last and greatest herald of heaven's King,
> Girt with rough skins, hies to the desert wild,
> Among that savage brood the woods forth bring,
> Which he than man more harmless found and mild:
> His food was locusts, and what young doth spring,
> With honey that from virgin hives distill'd;
> Parch'd body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing
> Made him appear, long since from earth exil'd.
> There burst him forth: "All ye, whose hopes rely
> On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn;
> Repent, repent, and from old errors turn."
> Who listen'd to his voice, obey'd his cry.
> Only the echoes, which he made relent,
> Rung from their marble caves, "Repent, repent!"

As soon as he drew near the settlements, John had apparently no difficulty in getting an audience. Crowds flocked from every direction to hear and see the uncouth preacher. Some of them came not only from adjoining districts but from as far north as Galilee. They heard little to their advantage. He called them a generation of vipers, and put the ironical question, Who warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come? He told the proud Jews that their ancestry and their laws were equally

powerless to save them. Abraham cannot help you now!

The people were impressed, and like Bunyan's Christian, they asked, What shall we do? He gave them practical instruction in doing good, striking at the root of sin, which is invariably selfishness. If you have two coats, give one to him who has none; share your abundance of food with the hungry. He was equally definite in speaking to the representatives of two classes of people, who drew near to ask questions. The publicans (tax-gatherers) enquired, Teacher, what shall we do? The answer: Exact no more than that which is appointed you. Be honest. Then came soldiers with the same question. They were told to refrain from violence, and to be content with their wages.

John was called John Baptist because he immersed in the river all those who believed in his teaching, and expressed a desire to live a better life. Baptism was a symbol of cleansing, of removing the stains of sin, and of beginning the new way in purity. Little did John know that this rite would be the Christian symbol for ages to come. The original baptism by John, to which Jesus submitted, was a complete immersion in water; the Greek word to baptize means to immerse. In later times pouring and sprinkling were substituted by many Christian churches as a symbol of immersion, as immersion itself was a symbol; the Greek church, the Baptists,

and some other denominations adhere to the original form.

Many in the crowd thought that John was himself the Messiah; he set them right by saying that there was One coming the strings of whose sandals he was not worthy to untie. I indeed baptize you in water; but He, mightier than I, will baptize you in the flame of the Holy Spirit. There will then be a thorough winnowing, separation of the wheat from the chaff. John had come to prepare and to foretell, nothing more.

The Fourth Gospel gives us more details. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light; and when the Jews became so interested that they sent their most august delegates, priests and Levites from Jerusalem, and these haughty prelates asked him if he were the Messiah or Elijah, he told them he was neither one nor the other, but was a Voice crying in the wilderness. Then they demanded of him by what authority he baptized his converts; and he replied as before, that he baptized only in water, adding significantly, "but there standeth One among you, whom ye know not."

The very next day John saw Jesus walking and instantly did homage. There was such holy radiance on the face of Jesus that John cried out, Behold the Lamb of God! After Jesus had been baptized by John, we hear no more of the prophet until he was imprisoned by Herod.

How long John's preaching continued no one can tell; but it was probably only a few months. Such a man was sure to get into trouble with the authorities. He boldly rebuked Herod, because that potentate had divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias. This attack naturally pleased Herod little and his new wife less, and as John was then preaching in his territory, he had him arrested and placed in prison. For a time his imprisonment was not irksome, except for the restriction of liberty; he was allowed to see his friends and send out communications.

And here we learn from Matthew one of the most depressing incidents in the Gospel narrative, yet one that is fundamentally true to human nature. John, the prophet and leader, on whose faith the faith of so many others depended, himself lost confidence. The New Testament resembles the Old in this: it never attempts to conceal or to palliate the weaknesses and sins of the chief representatives of the faith. It is certain that if anything whatever had been known against the character of Jesus, it would have been honestly set down. John, who had lived in the illimitable freedom of the desert, amid vast expanses of waste land and distant hills, with nothing but the sky over him, was now in prison, where he felt like a wild bird in a cage. The solitude of the wilderness is not like the solitude of a cell. He beat out his heart against the bars, and for a moment—only a moment, I think—his mighty

spirit was broken, his confidence shaken. Even in prison the news of the teachings and miracles of Jesus reached him, and instead of rejoicing that the Messiah whom he had celebrated was now in action and his own prophecies gloriously fulfilled, he sent him a melancholy message, a bitter revelation of what a prison can do to the most puissant and confident heart—"Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"

Sursum corda! If the greatest prophets can lose their trust, if men like Elijah and John can become bewildered and paralysed by doubt, it is not surprising that we of little faith should not always be serene.

The answer Jesus returned must have been like food and drink to the lonely prisoner. John's friends were to go back and report what their own eyes had beheld; the blind restored to sight, the lame walking, the lepers cleansed, the deaf hearing, the dead alive again, and then, as the spiritual was always a climax to anything physical, the poor were having the gospel preached to them. This, which to men of the world would seem little enough in comparison with material miracles, was in reality the most important fact of all.

Immediately after John's disciples had started on the return journey, Jesus, as if to counteract any possible depreciatory thought of John in the minds of his audience—for he had been interrupted in the midst of his preaching by the messengers—

turned to the crowd and pronounced a magnificent eulogy on the Baptist. He was more than a prophet, he was the divine ambassador, he was the greatest of all men in history; yet, he added, and I can see the smile on his face, the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

The most detailed account of the death of John Baptist is given by Mark, though Matthew relates it and Luke alludes to it. Herod had been rebuked by John for taking to wife Herodias, and was imprisoned for his temerity; yet the king bore him no particular grudge; indeed he feared to injure him, for he knew that he was a just and holy man. Occasionally he sent for the prophet, and listened to him attentively and gladly. Mark says, "when he heard him, he did many things," a curious way of expressing that he did not know exactly what to do, being in extreme perplexity. John was safe enough so far as Herod was concerned, and might have been set at liberty. But the female of the species was more deadly than the male. So long as John lived, he was a standing rebuke to the king's new wife Herodias, whom he had condemned; and Herodias, who held the same attitude toward John that Jezebel had maintained toward Elijah, was determined to kill him. She had made a demand for his execution from her husband, and was flatly refused. She therefore waited for her opportunity. The convenient day came.

Herod celebrated his birthday by giving a formal

supper-party to which were invited his lords, high captains, and chiefs of Galilee; when he was sufficiently drunk, his step-daughter Salome—her name is not given in the New Testament—danced in his presence, adding to the inflammation of wine the excitement of sensuality. The king was so enthusiastic that he told the young dancer to ask of him anything, even to the half of his kingdom, and she would receive it. She consulted with her crafty and vindictive mother, who may not have been pleased by Herod's delight in her daughter, but who saw a way to capitalise it; her mother told the girl to ask for the head of John the Baptist.

This sinister request, so unlike what he had anticipated, sobered the king. He was exceeding sorry. But his promise to the dancer had been made in the presence of all the supper guests, and he would not go back on his oath. He therefore sent the executioner, who beheaded John in the prison. The head was brought on a platter and formally presented to Salome, who gave the horrible gift to her horrible mother. Herodias gazed on the head with satisfaction, knowing that she had silenced that accusing mouth. But she could not destroy the words it had uttered nor their influence.

When the disciples of John heard of this cold-blooded murder, they came, took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb. The superstitious king, when report came later of the teachings and miracles of Jesus, cried out: "It is John, whom I beheaded: he

is risen from the dead!" It is certain that Herod never forgot John.

John had completely fulfilled his mission. The morning star faded only in the sunrise.

The dancing of Salome and her evil petition were made the subject of a drama, *Salomé* (1893), by Oscar Wilde, written in French, and translated into most European languages. Its representation was forbidden in England, but though it has a decadent odour, it is a work of genius, and gives a wonderful picture of the selfish, pagan, degenerate court, contrasting its frivolity with the asceticism of the lonely prophet. Richard Strauss used the story for an almost equally famous opera. The personality and teachings of John the Baptist form the subject of an admirable German play by the accomplished dramatist Hermann Sudermann, *Johannes* (1898): although it is deeply reverent in spirit, its performance on the Berlin stage was forbidden by the German emperor, Wilhelm II, whose religious nature was shocked.

Long before either of these plays appeared, however, Flaubert had written in that style of which he alone possessed the secret, a short story, *Hérodias* (1877), in which the august prisoner denounced the queen, and brought his doom upon himself. The dancing of Salome is described, her petition, the appearance of the head, the remorse of the king. It was from this tale that Oscar Wilde drew the material for his play.

The first incident recorded of Jesus after his conversation with the doctors when he was twelve, is his baptism by John. He began his ministry by observing the rite prescribed by John for all believers. Many have wondered that Jesus insisted on this. He had no sins to cleanse away, and needed no symbol of purification. Yet I see no difficulty and no inconsistency. In this as in everything else Jesus set an example to his followers; in every detail he more than illustrated his precepts. His life was even more eloquent than his words. Here the severest scrutiny fails to detect any disparity between conduct and speech. It was natural, therefore, that he wished to be baptized.

The baptism of Jesus is mentioned by all four evangelists. It seems strange to me that there is no record of Jesus performing this rite himself.

Jesus was about thirty when his baptism marked his formal entrance upon his professional work, and Luke says he was the son (as was supposed) of Joseph. The people knew him at first only in his human aspect. Among the crowd that travelled south from Galilee to hear John was Jesus himself; and we learn (only from Matthew) that John, instantly recognising the character of the candidate, protested, actually forbade him to be baptized, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" This remark must have made an impression on the throng, for it was so unlike the haughty and confident words which the prophet usu-

ally spoke. The reply of Jesus to John's remonstrance ought to make clear the reasons for his baptism—"thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

Divine consecration crowned the completion of the rite; as Jesus came out of the water, he saw a celestial vision, heard a voice of approval, and perhaps for the first time fully realised his direct relation to God. He immediately retired into the wilderness to reflect on these things, and there came the triple temptation. The temptation came, but he was armed. The story is given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke; but Mark gives no details, and the order of the three satanic invitations differs in Matthew from that related by Luke.

He fasted forty days and forty nights, sufficient evidence of his magnificent fortitude and vitality. The tempter asked for a sign, suggesting that if he be really the Son of God he might command that the stones all around him be transformed into bread. Jesus replied that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. He had meat to eat that his adversary knew not of. He was then wafted in imagination to the pinnacle of the Temple, and asked to throw himself down, the Devil citing Scripture for his purpose. Jesus replied, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God—a positive, unqualified assertion of his own divinity. Then the glory of the world was revealed to him and the price necessary to secure it, a

price subsequently paid by Napoleon and others. Jesus commanded his enemy to retire, saying, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

It is interesting that all three of the answers of Jesus were taken from the book of Deuteronomy. I remember when I was a boy hearing a sermon by George F. Pentecost, in which he drew attention to this fact, saying that Jesus found his weapons in Deuteronomy, "that grand old armoury of God."

At the third retort, the adversary left him. Luke is the only evangelist who added significantly three words: he departed from him *for a season.* There is no doubt that throughout his career and up to the last moment on the cross Jesus was subject to temptation. He was good not because he heard no insidious whispers, but because he never yielded to them.

The three temptations appealed respectively to his physical need, hunger, to a display of his supernatural power, magic, and to the universal love of fame, authority over mankind. Jesus did not begin to preach nor to win disciples until he had been tested physically, mentally, spiritually. He was now like a trained athlete ready to run his course. He was fitted to conquer others, because he had domination over himself.

When I was a boy and had finished the reading of *Paradise Lost,* which everyone admits to be a great poem, while only a few know how interesting

it is, I was led by natural curiosity to examine *Paradise Regained*. This, like most sequels, is inferior in literary distinction to its predecessor; but it is assuredly not dull. I had supposed that as Paradise was lost by the fall of Adam and Eve, it was regained by the crucifixion of Christ; and I looked for a Miltonic version of the Saviour's sufferings, death, and resurrection. I wondered how he would treat such tragic and majestic themes. To put it mildly, I was surprised to discover that the entire poem was devoted to the temptation in the wilderness; but my disappointment gave way to satisfaction when I found myself captivated by the narrative, and when I reflected that Our Lord's success in repelling Satan was in itself conclusive evidence that Paradise had been regained for man. Milton was right in selecting this incident out of all others in the New Testament; the antithesis is perfect. The Devil tempted Eve and she fell; the Devil tempted Jesus, and he triumphed. The Devil tempted Eve in a lovely garden, where every desire of the senses was easily satisfied; for, as so often happens, an increase in luxury was accompanied by a decrease in the power of resistance. The Devil tempted Jesus in a barren, comfortless desert, and at a time when his body was racked by the pangs of hunger. His defence was impenetrable.

Milton was right, too, in not attempting to describe the scene of the crucifixion, but to give his attention to an episode well within the scope of his

genius. His reverence of mind was equalled by his discrimination in art.

It is interesting to observe that Milton followed the order of temptations as given in Luke, rather than that in Matthew. Why he did this I do not know. He added many details not found in or suggested by any of the Evangelists; the Devil first appeared to Jesus in the likeness of an old peasant, but his disguise was instantly detected. Milton, who showed so plainly in *Paradise Lost* his respect for the ability of Satan, again shows it here; for in Book II, at a council of the Infernal Powers, when Belial suggested that the same temptation be tried on Jesus that was so successful with Solomon, the wisest of men, he was sharply rebuked by the King of Hell, who told him that while women had often destroyed certain types of men, here was a Being far above such illusions.

> How would one look from his majestick brow,
> Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill,
> Discountenance her despised, and put to rout
> All her array; her female pride deject,
> Or turn to reverent awe!

Incidentally I have often wondered whether the pun in the following passage was deliberate, or whether Milton, who never saw what he had composed, but dictated in his blindness, made an unintentional slip. He is describing how the slumbers of Jesus during his fasting were afflicted by dreams of food.

Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood,
And saw the *ravens* with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn,
Though *ravenous,* taught to abstain from what they brought.

When Satan tempted Our Lord with fame, that last infirmity of noble minds, there can be no doubt that the reply which Milton gave to the divine lips was inspired partly by his own contempt for notoriety, contrasting it with that serious purpose which should inspire the greatest poets.

For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmix'd?
And what the people but a herd confus'd,
A miscellaneous rabble who extol
Things vulgar, and, well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise?
They praise, and they admire, they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk,
Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise?
His lot who dares be singularly good.

Milton had the satisfaction of knowing that his poetry was appreciated by those whose opinion was most worth having. As Ben Jonson, the contemporary of Shakespeare, declared that the plays of the man from Stratford were superior to all the Greek and Latin authors, so Dryden, the contemporary of Milton, said that the blind poet had outclassed the best of Greece and Rome. To those who still believe that Milton was not understood by

his own age, it is well to recall to their attention the superlative tribute of Dryden.

> Three Poets in three distant ages born,
> Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
> The first in loftiness of thought surpassed:
> The next in majesty: in both the last.
> The force of nature could no further go;
> To make a third, she joined the former two.

Milton is studied in schools and colleges, but not sufficiently read for pleasure. Especially will students of the Bible find him illuminating and interesting.

After the ordeal in the desert, Jesus went northwest into the country of Galilee, and began his preaching. His first two disciples were fishermen, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew. The way in which they were drawn to Jesus is somewhat differently described by Mark and by John, but at all events they were the first to enlist. It is surprising that Jesus is so often depicted as effeminate in appearance and manner, when the men who were most instantly attracted to him were rough fishermen, who certainly would not have followed him had he not in voice, bearing, and in everything displayed the marks of virility. Fishermen recognise courage, force, manliness; as we must always think of Jesus as young, we must think of him as full of the vigour that ought to accompany youth and health.

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew busy with their nets. He called them to him, saying he would make them to become fishers

of men. They felt such an irresistible attraction that they left off work immediately and followed him. A few steps farther and he saw old Zebedee in a boat with his two sons, James and John, who, with a number of hired men, were mending nets. The imperial voice again called, and the two brothers left boat and work and assistants and their own father, and followed after the Teacher.

According to Luke, Jesus began his preaching not only in Galilee in general, but in Nazareth in particular. With what immense interest the inhabitants of that town must have seen returning to them the carpenter who had lived and worked there so many years, his face illuminated by the light of the Holy Spirit and his words ringing with the sound of authority. If any young man has left his village to go away and study, his friends and neighbours are intensely curious to see him on his return, to witness his development, to discover what use he has made of his opportunities. Thus—how fortunate that we have Luke's Gospel—he came to Nazareth, "where he had been brought up:" he went like a devout Jew into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as he had always done, but this time he stood up to read aloud. Some one placed in his hands the book of the prophet Isaiah, the same book quoted by John the Baptist. He opened it, he found the place he wanted, and read what we now know to be his Platform, his Programme, the sole reason for his appearance on earth.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

He finished reading: he gave the book to the minister: he sat down. All eyes were fastened upon him. They wondered what he would say. In the intense silence he spoke the one sentence which is perhaps the most important statement ever heard in the world.

This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

You all know the prophecy of Isaiah; well, it has come true. Here I am. No need to peer into the future, no need for further hopes or fears, the scripture is here and now fulfilled, not by any sign or portent, but by me, in my person. The Kingdom of God is not coming; it has come.

The people looked on one another with amazement. They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

He knew the custom of humanity to depreciate men and things that have long been familiar. And he said quietly, with no bitterness, simply forecasting their thoughts, No prophet is accepted in his own country. He went on to give instance after instance from the Scriptures; but by this time the audience had recovered from the first shock of surprise.

They were filled with wrath, looking upon him as a blasphemer; they thrust him out of the church, out of the city, and meant to kill him. At the edge of a cliff, he walked back serenely through them. This was the first time he was mobbed, because it was the first time he had preached in his home town. Nothing is stranger than the truth, and nothing more unwelcome to the average mind. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. The light shone in the darkness: the darkness comprehended it not.

What was his Platform proclaimed on that day of days?

He was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor. No matter how rich in money and lands and property one may be, one without faith is poor indeed. And those who have received in their hearts the Good News brought by Jesus, they are passing rich; they have the wealth of love. *He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted.* One does not have to experience unusual calamities to have one's heart broken; every man and woman suffers more than once from heartbreak. It is impossible to escape that experience. Well, Jesus came to heal these broken hearts and restore them with hope and joy. *To preach deliverance to the captives*—we are all in bondage. We are slaves to our sins or to our fears, to our habits or to our anxieties; sometimes to our pleasures. Christ came to remove these shackles and set us free. *Recovering of sight to the blind*—we cannot see. The truth is there and it is hidden from us. Jesus came

to open our eyes, that we might behold the most beautiful thing in the world. I suppose that after death, when we have unblemished and unclouded vision, and we then remember the days on earth, we shall wonder most of all how we could have been so blind. There were signs everywhere that ought to have been convincing. Only the pure in heart shall see God; the reason we cannot see Him now is because none of us is pure in heart. Jesus came to clarify our sight. A peasant with the love of God is more clear-eyed than the shrewdest statesman or cleverest man of affairs without it. *To set at liberty them that are bruised*—no accident is necessary to bruise us. Mere daily living is sufficient. As walking on a rocky road bruises the feet, so the pilgrimage of life, even in the most fortunate circumstances, leaves us scarred. Every man and woman has soul-bruises, is weatherworn. Jesus came to give us liberty, so that we shall stand up and walk as free men should walk. *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord*—to tell us that this should be the happiest moment in our lives.

Observe that in this programme there is no warning, there is no threat; there is no toil or tax demanded. All that is asked is faith, the willingness to receive; the honest acceptance of something more free than the wind. The Physician is himself the remedy. Jesus never added a hair's weight to the burden of care and woe. He is the only Conqueror who came, not to oppress, but to relieve.

III

PRAYER AND MIRACLES

Two Forms of the Lord's Prayer—Meaning of the Title—66 words—Universal Application of This Prayer—The Separate Petitions—Lead Us Not Into Temptation—Various Explanations of This—Browning and Stevenson—Long Prayers an Intolerable Nuisance—Mark Twain—The Patience of God—Prayer Is Correspondence—The Trolley Car—George Meredith—Doctor Johnson and Admiral Farragut—Barrie and Henley—Prayer and Auto-Suggestion—Testimony of a Professional Psychologist—The Normality of Prayer—Miracles—Helps and Stumblingblocks—The Original Necessity of Miracles—Browning and the Apostle John—Water and Wine—The Healing of Paralysis—Spirit and Body—Holiness and Hygiene—Soul and Life—The Yoke—The Happy Mother—Jesus and His Family—Christianity and Rich Men—Zacchæus and His Conversion—The Blind Beggar—Social Standing of the Samaritans—The Samaritan Woman—Edmond Rostand—The Woman Taken in Adultery—What Did Jesus Write?—The Resurrection of Lazarus—Martha and Mary—Lazarus in Literature—Tennyson, Browning, Dostoevski—The Primary Question.

III

PRAYER AND MIRACLES

There are two forms of the Lord's Prayer given in the New Testament, the longer in the sixth chapter of Matthew, the shorter in the eleventh chapter of Luke. Luke says it was dictated to the disciples in response to a definite request from them; Lord, teach us to pray. Jesus himself had been praying, and perhaps, impressed by the glorified expression on his face, they asked him how to obtain similar refreshment and exaltation. In Matthew, the Lord's Prayer is included in the Sermon on the Mount, as part of the general instructions to his followers.

As has been observed, we must remember that the Lord's Prayer is so called, not because it was the prayer that he used, but rather the prayer that he taught us as best adapted to our necessities. There is no surer evidence of inspiration than this immortal oblation, so perfectly fitted for the bodily and spiritual needs of every individual in the world. Whatever may be said about the obsolescence of creeds, however limited in time and place theological dogmas may be, it is remarkable that the impromptu

prayer taught by Jesus to some humble disciples in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago, is applicable at this moment to the necessities of all sorts and conditions of men. Indeed it is impossible to imagine any future time when the world can outgrow a single phrase of the Lord's Prayer. In this, as in everything else, Jesus was always in advance of the farthest reaches of human thought.

The longest form of the Lord's Prayer in the Authorised Version contains only 66 words—a rebuke to the intolerable verbosity of many petitioners.

Beginning with the words, *Our Father,* there is instantly established the close intimacy of man and God. Good, bad, obedient, disobedient, indifferent, cynical, ungrateful, we are all His children. Thackeray, in a letter to his little daughter about religion, wrote, "Every one of us in every fact, book, circumstance of life sees a different meaning and moral, and so it must be about religion. But we can all love each other and say 'Our Father.' "

There has perhaps never in human history been a time when the four words *Hallowed be Thy Name* have needed more emphasis than now. Swearing, cursing, blaspheming, have enormously increased in the twentieth century; they come frequently from the lips of learned and highly cultivated men, and from the mouths of women of "good social standing." Years ago, in a satire on the English, a Frenchman said that while English women would never dream of saying "My God!" they often say "Mon Dieu!"

as though God understood only English. Well, times have changed; and today the women do not resort to a foreign tongue. The World War is responsible for much of the general increase of swearing. Shakespeare described the soldier as "full of strange oaths," and the modern soldier is no less proficient than his predecessors. During the war I heard many stay-at-homes curse when speaking of the conflict, and even the reticent Henry James swore in his letters. The Catholics have done much good by organising the Holy Name society, where the members are pledged to refrain from blasphemy.

We are taught to pray for the advance of the kingdom, not only because we ought to desire its coming, but because it cannot come except through prayer. It has always seemed to me a mistake to believe that the expression, *Thy will be done* should be used mainly in times of sorrow, frustration, and despair. It has to me no note of resignation, but rather a sound of joy and triumph. The best thing that can happen to the individual and to society is that the will of God be done on earth and by man. *Give us this day our daily bread* is characteristic of our Lord's practical common sense, his recognition of our bodily necessities. Literally the next petition reads, "Forgive us our debts, as we *have forgiven* our debtors." We have no right to ask that our offences be forgiven until we have forgiven all those who have injured us. We cannot be in the mood for prayer until our hearts are cleansed of the

poison of malice. Otherwise, our prayers are mere words; and the King in *Hamlet,* after vainly trying to pray, said

> My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
> Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

Did Jesus regard any particular phrase of the Lord's prayer as more important than the others? It would seem so. After dictating the prayer, he commented on only one passage. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." The idea of substituting forgiveness for resentment is so eternally and universally strange to human nature, that it required emphasis. Furthermore, in that lies the essence of Christian morality, as distinguished from the morality of merely honourable men.

How many men and women in various congregations repeat these words, without the slightest intention to observe them! Next time suppose we think of some particular instance where we can apply this part of the prayer. It will be easier to think of it than to forgive.

The next phrase is the only one not transparently clear. *Lead us not into temptation.* The Revised Version attempted unsuccessfully to make it less puzzling by translating it *Bring* us not into temptation. Edwin Booth was once asked to repeat the

Lord's Prayer, and when he came to this petition, he said "Lead us"—and then, after a long, impressive pause, "*not* into temptation." It may be that the passage was often used in the early church by hypocrites, who having done wrong, tried to cloak their descent into evil by saying that God had led them into temptation; for the apostle James in his Letter, remarked, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

It may be in reality one of the most intimate parts of the prayer used as a child would speak to his father, if alone with him in the woods or in the water: "O father, don't lead me into danger, don't take me where is peril." It is founded on one's natural mistrust of one's own strength in emergencies, not in an actual belief that one's father would naturally lead one into difficulty. It is a plea for safety, coming from the dependence of the human heart.

In *The Ring and the Book,* Browning put into the mouth of the Pope the following comments on the manner in which Caponsacchi had through the very nature of his errand of mercy, been himself led into temptation; the necessity of giving aid to Pompilia made him unavoidably expose his own soul to danger.

> Why comes temptation but for man to meet
> And master and make crouch beneath his foot,
> And so be pedastaled in triumph? Pray
> "Lead us into no such temptation, Lord!"
> Yea, but, O Thou whose servants are the bold,
> Lead such temptations by the head and hair,
> Reluctant dragons, up to who dares fight,
> That so he may do battle and have praise!

In commenting on this, Stevenson said, "It is lawful to pray that we be not led into temptation; but not lawful to skulk from those that come to us. The noblest passage in one of the noblest books of this century is where the old Pope glories in the partial fall and but imperfect triumph of the younger hero."

On this difficult phrase, E. L. Bower, of Kansas City, writes me as follows: "When I was a young man in St. Joseph, my pastor, the Rev. Dr. E. H. Brumbaugh, a graduate of Northwestern University, gave us what may be a solution for this passage. He said that possibly Our Lord had in mind the teachings which were then current that there was one Chief Devil who sent his emissaries, both spirit and human, of all sorts, about to tempt people, that he also used inanimate things to excite to temptation, that by all sorts and means he sought to cause people to do evil. . . . Now Our Lord sought to impress upon his followers the importance of not only not committing actual sin but of avoiding the desire or temptation to commit sin. That it was right to pray that in going about in the various walks and duties

of life that we should pray not to be led in the way of the tempter."

Professor Charles C. Torrey, the eminent authority on the Semitic languages, writes me: "I don't believe, myself, that the original (Aramaic) meant what our too literal Greek means. There is another passage, Matt. 26: 41, (and Mark 14: 38, Luke 22: 46), which I think should be taken in connection with the words in the Lord's Prayer. 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation' is too general, too weak, for the situation; as more than one commentator has remarked, though no one has suggested any other meaning of the words (no other is possible in the Greek). I think that the original was: 'Awake, and pray *not to be overcome* in the trial (which is at hand)' i.e., pray for strength to stand against the coming test—which in fact proved too much for them. In the Lord's Prayer we certainly have the same verb, in the causative stem; meaning (as I think): 'Let us not *be overcome* by temptation."

Professor Torrey's interpretation is the most reasonable I have seen.

It is well to pray every day that we be delivered from evil. This phrase surely does not refer to any especial emergency or disaster; it refers to our daily environment, to the very air we breathe. At all times we are surrounded by evil, and we must look to God for deliverance; not that we may escape from the atmosphere of it—for that is im-

possible—but that we may by divine aid triumph over it.

The splendid doxology at the end is not given in Luke, and it does not appear in the earliest manuscripts of Matthew. But I am glad that in the Authorised Version the prayer begins and ends with a salutation to Omnipotence.

Jesus was a man of prayer; and drew from that source his daily strength. His remarks on prayer are as sensible as his advice on all other subjects. Don't pray for effect, don't pray to be observed, don't pray too long, and don't use vain repetitions, for you will not be heard for your much speaking; your Heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask it. He is more apt to give us what we need than what we want; one reason why so many prayers are not "answered."

It seems strange, in view of the definite command against vain repetitions, and against much speaking, that for centuries there has been on the programme of formal worship in many churches a monstrosity unblushingly called the Long Prayer. Sensible audiences find this infliction an intolerable nuisance; I do not believe it has ever done anybody any good. The audience are in an uncomfortable attitude, whether they are kneeling or sitting with bowed heads; if it is summer, they are in the worst possible position to endure the heat; if it is winter, the majority have colds, and are snuffling like stage Puritans. When the long prayer is finally over, one

can plainly hear the tremendous sigh of relief that rises from the audience, equivalent to "ouf! that's over!"

Mark Twain, in his burlesque remarks on Elijah and the Prophets of Baal, took the opportunity to get a little revenge for the long prayers that had embittered his childhood. "Isaac knelt down and began to pray; he strung along, and strung along, about the heathen in distant lands, and about the sister churches, and about the State and the country at large, and about those that's in authority in the Government, and all the usual program, you know, till everybody got tired and gone to thinking about something else."

Perhaps one reason why ministers who indulge themselves in lengthy prayers have so little success is because they have worn out not only the endurance of their audiences, but the very patience of God.

If the Lord spoke through Isaiah, the preceding sentence is no exaggeration: "Bring no more vain oblations. . . . they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to hear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear."

Prayer in private should be a regular correspondence with our Unseen Friend; to use prayer only when one is sick or in trouble, is like writing a letter to some one only when you want to borrow money. Strength comes from exercise; love begets love.

But the way of the world is to use prayer only as a last resort.

Tennyson summed up a common human attitude when he said,

We mock thee when we do not fear.

In *King Henry V,* Mrs. Quickly, describing the death of Falstaff, says,

> So 'a cried out—God, God, God! three or four times; but I, to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet.

Prayer comforts us, strengthens us, and saves us. An American father told me that when his son was leaving home to enter a distant university, he longed to give him advice, but hardly knew what to say; finally he asked the boy to promise him simply this, that every night before going to sleep he would say a prayer. The boy promised and the father felt sure of him. After he was graduated, the son told him that he had prayed every single night. Within a year, the young man was killed in action in the great war; his father's anguish was softened by this remembrance. I happened to know the boy very well indeed; the last word to describe him would be the word prig. John Overton won many prizes in intercollegiate athletics.

Prayer is the link between man and God. I remember many years ago, hearing a sermon by the Rev. A. J. Gordon, in which he used the homely

simile of the trolley-car. That vehicle draws its power from above. So long as the arm aloft is connected with the overhead wire, which brings the source of power, so long will the trolley-car continue to advance. The moment the trolley is off, the car stops. Prayer is like that. We draw our motive power from above, and the connexion must be kept; the way to keep it is by prayer.

I suppose there is hardly anyone, no matter how apparently sceptical or indifferent, who has not at some time prayed. I should not have suspected George Meredith of being a praying man, if I had not found the following passage in a letter to his son, written 25 April 1872. "Do not lose the habit of praying to the unseen Divinity. Prayer for worldly goods is worse than fruitless, but prayer for strength of soul is that passion of the soul which catches the gift it seeks." Observe that the great novelist did not counsel his son merely to pray; he said, "Do not lose the habit of praying." He could not have given such advice unless he had the custom himself of regular prayer.

Many are attempting just now to make out that Stevenson had no moral principles. It is well, therefore, to remember that his magnificent courage in that "long disease, his life," came from daily prayer. Here is a short prayer he composed for his household at Vailima:

> The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man, help us to

perform them with laughter and kind faces, let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonoured, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep.

Is there anything unmanly in prayer? Dr. Johnson, who certainly did not lack virility, prayed every day of his life; John Quincy Adams, a man of iron, said every night in the White House, the prayer his mother had taught him as a child. Admiral Farragut, the fearless sea fighter, wrote this letter to his wife just before the battle of Mobile Bay:

My dearest Wife: I write and leave this letter for you. I am going into Mobile Bay in the morning, if God is my leader, as I hope He is, and in Him I place my trust. If He thinks it is the proper place for me to die, I am ready to submit to His will, in that as in all other things. . . . Your devoted and affectionate husband, who never for one moment forgot his love, duty, or fidelity to you.

Farragut entered the United States Navy at the age of nine, and as a midshipman, twelve years old, fought in the South Pacific ocean in the war of 1812, where for a time he had the responsibility of command. A rough sea-dog, he had beheld the seamy side of life everywhere; no one could teach him anything about the savagery either of nature or of man. Whatever he was, he was not effeminate. In his earliest youth he learned to be self-reliant; but he was not ashamed of his dependence on God.

J. M. Barrie, in his remarkable address on

Courage, delivered at St. Andrews in May 1922, quoted Henley's famous line

My head is bloody but unbowed

and commented: "a fine mouthful, but perhaps My head is bloody and bowed is better."

Many sceptical people believe that prayer is an illusion; that it is entirely subjective, without any true objective value; that therefore it reduces itself to a form of auto-suggestion. But if one looks at the matter with more scientific exactitude, one will see that instead of prayer being a form of auto-suggestion, it is the other way round. Auto-suggestion, whenever it produces any valuable results, is in reality a form of prayer. Let us call in here the expert testimony of a professional psychologist, William Brown, M.D., of the University of Oxford. In the chapter on the Practice of Prayer, which he contributed to the little book, *Religion and Life,* he remarks,

"There are certain analogies to this in what happens in many cases of prayer. The individual is in an unsatisfactory situation, he wishes that situation to be altered, and he prays that it may be altered. In praying he concentrates his mind on what he desires and wishes to occur; and he does so with the belief and in the expectation that, through the goodness of God, it will occur. Very often that benefit does occur. Accordingly you find many people saying that prayer is only auto-suggestion.

"Personally I am disposed to reverse the statement, and to say that auto-suggestion is prayer. Auto-suggestion, where it succeeds, is, I believe, much more nearly akin to prayer than is generally recognised by those interested only in the treatment of functional nerve disease by suggestion. I mean that it is rarely successful unless the patient has at least a sub-conscious belief that 'the Universe is friendly.' Auto-suggestion admittedly demands 'confidence'; but what does this mean? Just as the mere fact of seeking for the cause of a particular phenomenon involves as its intellectual basis the tacit assumption of the principle of the Uniformity of Nature; so I would urge, the emotional basis of a particular auto-suggestion is some measure of confidence, implicitly felt if not explicitly confessed, in the general beneficence of the Nature of Things. In religious natures this confidence expresses itself definitely as faith in God; and, with this explicitly assumed, auto-suggestion is quite clearly a form of prayer.

"I have come to this conclusion from studying a number of my own patients and my own consciousness. For myself I find it is practically impossible to carry out auto-suggestion with conviction without it being really a form of prayer, since some kind of belief in the spiritual nature of the Universe seems to be implied in the belief that power is there to make the result suggested come true. It is perfectly impossible for me to believe mechanically; and in auto-

suggestion merely thinking mechanically of a desired result is more likely to prejudice than to bring about its realisation. I know that some patients have benefited without the slightest element of *conscious* belief. But I find that quite a number of patients state that, even though it may not be so at the beginning, yet in the course of time, as the auto-suggestion works, they are getting more and more what I should call a feeling of 'faith' in a Power beyond themselves, helping them towards health. And the point I wish to emphasise is that this increase of faith cannot be regarded as a disease phenomenon, seeing that it is one that emerges in the course of a cure and is a thing that progressively develops as the patient is returning from a state of mental disease to a state of mental health."

It is important to remember then that the habit of praying is not a sign of morbidity or abnormality; it is a sign of health. Those men and women who are in a state of harmony with the eternal laws of the Universe are the most healthy, the most composed, the most tranquil in heart; and this harmony can be best obtained and maintained by the habit of daily prayer.

It is idle to attempt to cancel or to explain away the miracles of Jesus. If we could satisfactorily dispose of some of them, others would remain. Once more, let it be repeated that if Jesus was a divine, unique personality, it is not unreasonable to believe

that he would have and use powers beyond human capacity or understanding; if he was not unique, then our religion is baseless.

It is, however, curious that the original evidences of his divine origin are now stumbling-blocks to faith. When he was on earth, many believed in him because of his mighty works; today many are repelled by these same stories. They might accept the Christian religion if it were not for those impossible tales. We know very little about the working of one man's mind on another's body; but we know enough to know the astounding things that are accomplished in our own day, merely through mental influence. Still, I have no desire to explain the miracles in natural terms.

The reason why miracles were more necessary in the early days of Christianity than now is ingeniously explained by Browning in his poem on the death of the Apostle John, called *A Death in the Desert.* When Christianity was in its infancy, it was essential that public attention be called to it by signs and wonders; now that the evidences of it are all about us, signs and wonders are not needed. If you plant seeds in a garden, before they come up you put signs there, indicating that the precious plants are underneath, to prevent people from stepping carelessly and destroying what they cannot see; but when the flower blooms above ground, and all can see its beauty, it would be absurd to call attention to it by a sign. In the same way, babies must be fed,

whether they ask for it or not; but when the boy is big enough to help himself, we tell him to feed himself or to starve. When the carpenter's son was on earth, attention was attracted to him by the miracles he performed, evidences of his connexion with divine forces; he might otherwise have remained in obscurity; but today, wherever one travels, one sees Christian churches.

The first miracle recorded is given only in John; it was the changing of water into wine; but is mainly interesting to us because it gives one more anecdote of his mother. Both Jesus and his mother were present at the wedding festivities. It was characteristic of her that she turned to her son for help, when the people giving the feast discovered they had no wine. Just exactly what did he mean, when he said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come?" Did he mean to test her faith in him? At all events, her faith met the test, for she told the servants to do whatever he commanded. The most graceful epigram ever made on this miracle is by the seventeenth century poet, Richard Crashaw, who wrote,

The conscious water saw its God and blushed.

It is pleasant that we first see Jesus exerting his power in the happiest of all gatherings, a wedding party, in the midst of laughter, and song, eating and drinking; but a miracle recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke, is even more characteristic. They

brought unto him one sick of the palsy. Remember that the word *palsy* meant when thus translated exactly the opposite of its present significance; we mean by palsy a continuous shaking; the translators meant absolute immobility. The sick man could not move at all. He had paralysis. There was an immense crowd; those who believed in Jesus brought the sufferer to him. We can easily imagine the surprise, the disappointment, the sceptical smiles, the general disgust, when Jesus said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, *thy sins* be forgiven thee.

The natural sentiment was, "Why, he doesn't want his *sins* forgiven; forgiveness won't cure him; what he wants is to *walk*. It is his *legs,* not his soul, that require attention." But Jesus, who knew their hearts, told them that if they thought it was easier to forgive sins than to cure bodily illness, he would prove his power to do both; and he called decisively to the invalid to get up and walk home, which he immediately did.

This incident has never been so pertinent as now. Institutional churches are no doubt good things, but the adjective is not so important as the noun. Today there are many even in the church who seem to think that if only everyone could have good food, good sanitation, and fresh air, they would be perfect. Would they? These things are enormously important, and no one does more good than a well-equipped medical missionary; but spiritual things should always come first. If we turned all the

churches into soup-kitchens, would that transformation save the world?

Jesus put first things first. He forgave the man's sins before he cured him of bodily ills. Cleanliness is next to godliness; yes, it is always *next,* never it.

Jesus put uncompromising emphasis on the life of the spirit. He was a spiritual teacher, a physician of the soul. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Let the dead bury their dead and come and follow me. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his life?

I was at first disappointed when I found the word formerly translated *soul* meant *life.* But Jesus in using the word Life meant the man's whole personality. It is possible to gain much and lose one's whole life.

Christianity is primarily a way of life, and one cannot find it without the lamp of the spirit. Once found, it is seen to be the way of peace and happiness. No saying of Jesus has been more misunderstood than the phrase "Take my yoke upon you." It was Henry Drummond who first made this passage clear to me. The common interpretation is that the yoke is a badge of slavery, an additional burden that must be borne if we would in truth be disciples of Jesus. The actual meaning is precisely the contrary of that. Jesus was a carpenter; he knew yokes, for he had made them. Why does the ox wear a yoke? To add to his burden? No: the

yoke makes it possible for him to draw the burden in the easiest and most comfortable way. My yoke is "easy." What is the burden for humanity? It is not calamity and misfortunes of unusual magnitude, it is simply life itself. It is not easy to live, and to bear the daily burden which we must all bear; but the best, the most sensible way, is the way taught by Jesus, his way. If we take his yoke, that is his method, we find it more possible to bear the daily burden. With his easy yoke, the burden is light; as the ox, without the yoke, would find the burden intolerably galling to his unprotected shoulders. What is the way of Jesus? "I am meek and lowly in heart." So many of our sorrows come from pride, from egotism, from sensitiveness, from self-importance. But the moment we can forget ourselves, we are free; we have tranquillity of mind, we have rest in our soul. The old poet, Henry Vaughan, wrote,

> O holy hope! and high humility!

The majority of people today suffer from nerves, and are trying every conceivable quack remedy, every kind of self-assurance; when the way of Jesus is the surest road to equilibrium, to poise, to grace of manner, to tranquillity. It is certain that if we could take his yoke—that is unreservedly try his method—we should find rest and peace, which thousands are now seeking in sanitariums, foreign travel, and drugs.

Jesus undoubtedly loved animals; but he thought them inferior in importance to man. He had no false sentimentality. The Pharisees were shocked because he allowed his disciples to pluck corn on the Sabbath, and because he cured men on the Sabbath day. He reminded them that they took care of the stock on the Sabbath, and that they would instantly relieve a sheep who had fallen into a pit; how much then is a man better than a sheep? If your Father feedeth birds, are ye not of much more importance than they?

There is one incident, recorded only in Luke, which brings the physical appearance of Jesus closer to me than almost any other event.

> And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

The word *blessed* in this instance means *happy*. At this moment, while Jesus was talking he looked so splendid, so irresistible, that one woman in the audience could not contain herself, being full of that generous envy that every woman has for another who is the mother of a particularly fine young man. I interpret her exclamation to mean simply, "Your mother must be a very happy woman!" The tribute from this unknown person brings Jesus directly before my eyes, and I see him in his brilliant, powerful young manhood. I am a professional teacher. Over and over again, when I come in contact with a pecu-

liarly admirable specimen of youth, I say to myself, "Your mother must be a happy woman."

The reply of Jesus to this enthusiastic salutation showed his aloofness from family pride, his willingness to welcome all into the circle of the truly fortunate. "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Not my mother alone, but all may be equally happy, if they will listen to me and observe my words. For on another occasion, when he was told that his mother and brothers were waiting for him outside, he said that everyone who did the will of God was a member of his own family. So far as I can remember, Jesus never spoke of his birth, of his childhood, or of Joseph; he looked forward and not back.

Those who believe that the way to spiritual health lies in self-assertion and in shouting to themselves their own virtues, should attend to the story of the two men who went into the temple to pray. One rehearsed his superior qualities, and the other called on God's mercy to save himself from himself. It is through a recognition of our unworthiness that we advance; complacent contemplation of our accomplishments closes the channel of divine communication.

Jesus was so friendly to the poor that many have forgotten his love of the rich, and his famous parable of Dives and Lazarus—which of course was not a fact, but merely an illustrative fiction—may have given the impression that there is a certain

virtue in being poor. Indeed, in the early days of Christianity there is no doubt that many poor pedestrians, seeing the wealthy drive by in handsome equipages, took a secret joy in thinking how reversed the situation would be in the next world. Jesus valued people according to their beauty of character, without regard to their possessions. It is no more true to say he was against the rich than that he was against the educated; but he knew that sometimes there were those who thought more of their money than of their character, and that there were scholars whose learning made them blind to the new Gospel. The individual, whatever his talents or riches, must let nothing get between him and the grace of God.

The story of Zacchaeus is told only by Luke. Tax-gatherers have never been particularly popular anywhere, and in Palestine they were execrated, because of their prevailing crooked dealing and heartless extortions. As Jesus passed through Jericho, one of the chief tax-gatherers, named Zacchaeus, who had accumulated a large fortune, was filled with desire to see him; but Zacchaeus was so short that he was lost in the crowd. He therefore, forgetting his dignity, forgetting everything but Jesus, climbed into a sycamore tree (in reality a fig-mulberry tree); it "has a short trunk, leaves resembling those of the mulberry, and fruit like the fig." Jesus, looking up, saw him, told him to hurry and come down, for he was to entertain Jesus at his house that day. Zac-

chaeus came down, and "received him joyfully." But just as rich Simon the Pharisee was shocked to see Jesus talking with a woman of the streets, so the mob was angry because Jesus dined with a sinful man. It is probable that the threats of the crowd toward the man in the tree had first drawn the attention of Jesus who gave them the same lesson he had given the Pharisee. It is not likely that Zacchaeus had been a good or just man; when he said, "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor," he evidently meant that in future he would do this, showing in the most convincing manner that he was truly a follower of Jesus. If he had heretofore been just, there would have been no sense in the popular feeling against him, or in the joyful recognition of his remark by Jesus, who said, "This day is salvation come to this house . . . for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." No one was more truly lost than a rich man who had acquired wealth dishonestly, and none stood in more acute need of salvation. Observe that the cause of joy was not that the poor were to receive some money, but that Zacchaeus had got a new heart.

As an illustration of the boundless scope of the sympathy of our Lord, and of the limitless area of God's mercy, let it be remembered that just before the interview with Zacchaeus, Jesus had healed a blind beggar, who showed the same alacrity as the

rich man. For as soon as the poor fellow received his sight, he "followed him."

Zacchaeus, Nicodemus, blind Bartimaeus, and Joseph of Arimathea, sufficiently illustrate the variety of men who received the Good News. As for the women, they followed Jesus everywhere, were faithful to him in life, stood by the cross, and were the first to visit the tomb.

The parable of the good Samaritan is told only by Luke; the account of the conversation with the woman of Samaria is given only by John. In New Testament history, Samaria is confined to the territory with Galilee on the north, Judaea on the south, Jordan on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west. As a rule the Samaritans were despised by the Jews, being aliens in religious faith; for this very reason the Gospel story calls attention to the fact that the only one of the cured ten lepers who returned to give thanks was a Samaritan; that the man who showed kindness to one in distress was a Samaritan; that the woman chosen to spread the story of the everliving water was a Samaritan. The one thing most intolerable to the spirit of Christianity is any form of caste, any feeling of national or social superiority.

Jesus was alone when he asked the Samaritan woman to give him a drink of water from the well. She of course saw that he was a Jew, and was surprised to find him without racial prejudice, for the

Jews used to feel as socially superior to others as many unintelligent Gentiles now feel toward them.

Jesus described to her the living water, and at first she took it literally, and asked—perhaps ironically—for water that would prevent the recurrence of thirst; just as when the crowd cried to Jesus, "Lord, give us this bread," they wished something edible; if he had performed a miracle and created bread before their eyes, they would have been satisfied. To the average listener, the living water and the bread of life meant only some tangible benefit.

But when he revealed to her that he was in very truth the Messiah, she left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and told her story; and many of the Samaritans believed on him because of her testimony. Their faith was assured by the sight of him, and they besought him to remain with them.

The famous French poet, Edmond Rostand, wrote a beautiful and devout drama called *The Samaritan Woman,* which he would permit to be performed on the stage only during Holy Week. It is characteristic of its author in being as deeply spiritual as it is brilliant in literary style.

The story of the woman taken in adultery, which Frank Harris calls the finest short story ever written, occurs only in John, and even there is lacking in most ancient manuscripts. No one knows how it got into the Gospel narrative; but observe two things. First, it is not a parable, but a report of an actual occurrence; second, it is thoroughly charac-

teristic of the Master, and is in harmony with the spirit of his teaching. He dealt with all sin not by cruelty, but by forgiveness; if the Puritans had learned this part of Christianity, such stories as Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* would have had no foundation. So far from dealing lightly with sin, his last words to the woman were *sin no more.*

I wish I knew why and what he wrote on the ground. Perhaps he meant to indicate his indifference to their howls for vengeance; perhaps he meant to show that any transitory word written by him on the ground was more permanent than the law of Moses engraved in stone.

I am sure that my readers will share my gratitude to Miss Mary J. Gregory, of Westminster, Colorado, who writes me that her uncle (a distinguished scholar), the late Caspar René Gregory, professor at the University of Leipzig, told her that among the many New Testament manuscripts he read, he found one which gave this variant reading after the words telling of Jesus writing on the ground—*"the sins of every one of them."* Here follows the discovery of Professor Gregory:

> In the gospel of St. John, chapter the eighth, we have a fragment of the most ancient Christian traditions; although this is not originally a part of this biblical book, it may well be older than the gospel of St. John.
>
> The fragment contains the narrative concerning the adulterous woman. Certain variations in different manuscripts increase our interest in this narrative. Three manuscripts which I have examined in Athens, Athos, and Dessau, add

greatly to the reality of this scene and increase the dramatic character of the occurrences. . . .

The Pharisees did not notice what Jesus had written. The men who stood at the right and left of Jesus looked at the writing. They told those standing next to them about it. They shrugged their shoulders. The Pharisees noticed the motions. The first, Eldad, the oldest, looked at the ground and read, "Eldad killed his friend, Hodar, in the wilderness." The picture of that day, forty years ago, when he slew his friend, flashed through his mind like lightning. No man saw it, yet it has come to light. Without a word Eldad turned and vanished. Jesus smoothed over the strokes in the sand and wrote once more while the next man, Horad, read: "Horad cheated Bunan's widow out of her house." Horad hurried away. Jesus wrote and Muman read: "The wife of Arved was forced to yield to the power of Muman." And when Muman had gone away Jesus wrote still more rapidly, and the scribes read till not one of them was left. As they read and were accused by their consciences they went out one after another, from the oldest down to the youngest. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman stood before him.

What now? Jesus spoke of casting a first stone. Will he pick up that stone? The woman waited for his verdict. But Jesus lifted up his head and looked at the woman. The multitude about him held its breath. And Jesus said: "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more." The woman goes out and Jesus turns again to the waiting people.

John is the only evangelist who tells of the resurrection of Lazarus, a story that has inspired many poets, dramatists, and novelists. A striking use of it occurs in Dostoevski's novel, *Crime and Punishment,* where a murderer and a harlot read the passage together under the flickering light of a candle.

I earnestly advise all lovers of the New Testament to read that chapter in the Russian book.

There must have been something peculiarly attractive about the man Lazarus and his two sisters. On the occasion of the death of Lazarus, Jesus not only went far out of his way to visit the afflicted family, but risked his life to do so. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." We learn from Luke of the occasion when he first became acquainted with them. Martha received him into her house, and being "cumbered about much serving," she asked Jesus to chide Mary for not helping in the work. The two sisters symbolise work and faith, conduct and worship; so clearly indeed, that Stephen Graham, in his book describing the difference in Christian attitude between the Anglo-Saxon and the Russian, took for his title *The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary*.

After the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus came to the house. Lazarus sat down with him to supper, and once more the difference between the sisters was strikingly made manifest. Martha served; and Mary anointed the feet of Jesus.

At the grave of Lazarus, although Jesus knew that he was about to raise him from the dead, and fill the sorrowing hearts of his family and friends with unspeakable joy, it is recorded that our Lord shed tears. These were tears of pure sympathy for those he loved; their sorrow was so contagious that he was affected. He wept with his friends, he

wept for the sins of Jerusalem, but he had no tears for himself.

It is interesting to see the different manner in which our two great Victorian poets, Tennyson and Browning, dealt with the raising of Lazarus. Tennyson was naturally interested mainly in what happened during the four days, that is, in the physical miracle.

> Where wert thou, brother, those four days?
> There lives no record of reply,
> Which telling what it is to die
> Had surely added praise to praise.
>
> Behold a man raised up by Christ!
> The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
> He told it not; or something seal'd
> The lips of that Evangelist.

Browning, on the other hand, is interested only in the *spiritual* change that had taken place in the character of Lazarus as a result of his experience. Lazarus was not only raised from the dead, he was born again; all selfishness and self-seeking had left him forever. In *The Strange Medical Experience of Karshish,* the new Lazarus is thus described:

> The man—it is one Lazarus a Jew,
> Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of age,
> The body's habit wholly laudable,
> As much, indeed, beyond the common health
> As he were made and put aside to show. . . .
> Whence has the man the balm that brightens all?
> This grown man eyes the world now like a child. . . .

The man is apathetic, you deduce?
Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,
Able and weak, affects the very brutes
And birds—how say I? flowers of the field—
As a wise workman recognises tools
In a master's workshop, loving what they make.
Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb:
Only impatient, let him do his best,
At ignorance and carelessness and sin—
An indignation which is promptly curbed.

For the most important question for every individual is not, Am I in good health? Shall I recover or not from this sickness? Must I die now, or years hence? The primary question should be, What kind of a man am I? Am I fit to die? Am I fit to live? Are the words of Jesus in the Gospels capable of raising us from death to spiritual life? Do we, even in the deadness of selfishness, respond to his call, and become truly and happily alive?

IV

THE PESSIMISM OF JESUS

Sufficient Unto the Day—Impractical Reformers—The Appeal to Reason—Candid Recognition of Evil by Jesus—Rousseau, Goethe, and Franklin—The Handicap of Virtue—The Illusion of Sin—The Treachery of Instinct—Pictures of War—H. G. Wells—The Prodigious If—Polyanna and the Gospel—The Value of Pessimism—The Practical Politician and the Dreaming Reformer—Cassius and Brutus—Jesus's Knowledge of the World—The Equipment of a Christian Minister—Evil from Good—The Curriculum in Theological Schools—Priests Should Study Passion—Jesus No Flatterer—His Acquaintance With Grief—His Cry of Despair—Healthy and Unhealthy Pessimism—Misrepresentation—The Woman in Simon's House—Offended in Jesus—Civil War in the Christian Church—Open Hostility Good for Religion—The Foolish Virgins—The Labourers—Political Attitude of Jesus—Politics and Religion—Dramatic Incident Narrated by Alfred Noyes.

IV

THE PESSIMISM OF JESUS

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

There is perhaps no phrase that contains a more candid recognition of the darker side of life, of its quotidian drawbacks and misfortunes. Well, who said it? A peevish invalid? A whining old woman? A man who had failed? A cynical politician? A worldly-wise philosopher? No: the phrase fell from the lips of him who brought the good tidings, who gave to humanity faith and hope.

Most reformers are impractical. In their vision they construct a world of no more reality than a dream. They imagine men and women to be otherwise than history proves them to be. They forget that the reason why the world is no better is not because of the lack of excellent teaching and beautiful schemes; the failure lies in the mental incompetency and moral obliquity of humanity. The plan of reform may be perfect; but it will be administered by those who are imperfect. The success of any method depends chiefly on the way it is put into practice.

Reformers often make the cardinal error of appealing only to reason. It is possible to make out

a good theoretical case, which would work smoothly if men and women in the mass were reasonable. But if they were all reasonable, we should need hardly any government at all. There is no use in appealing to reason when there is none in sight. You might as well try to turn aside with your own breath the current of an east wind. If you were chased by a maddened bull, you would not appeal to his reason; and a crowd of men and women have hardly more reason than a wild beast. We often, and quite properly use the expression public sentiment, public opinion; but never do we say public reason, for there is no such thing.

Thus no system of morality is enough; it has no more inspiring force than geometry. We must have a leader who arouses our love.

Men and women are swayed mainly by emotion, sentiment, passion. It is by no accident that Jean Jacques Rousseau is a more influential writer than Goethe or Benjamin Franklin. We may admire the great German and the great American more than we admire the plausible Frenchman; but Jean Jacques has been a more powerful germinal force because he was a sentimentalist, and appealed to the invincible sentimentality in the human breast. Only the few lead the life of reason.

Evil has an enormous natural advantage over good. Sin invariably appeals to our strongest instincts, to our desires and our passions; so far from appealing to reason, it temporarily puts reason

under an eclipse. In every human heart, no matter how well disciplined and fortified, sin has a formidable ally. Sin always creates an illusion, in which the tempted man sees only the pleasure of the contemplated act, while its consequences, which are in reality inseparably joined to it, are lost in the mist of desire. Nothing is so complete or so clever a cheat as Nature. She befuddles us with the illusive charm of a certain path of action, and we wake up in the mire. The love of money and the lust of the flesh are often as fatal to reason as an excess of alcohol; for there are many ways of becoming intoxicated.

The bank clerk, trying to support his wife and children on a moderate salary, and handling large sums of money daily, sees what he believes to be a sure opportunity of adding instantly to his resources; it apparently has every advantage except the negligible one of honesty. In two weeks he can replace the sum taken, and keep the splendid margin. If when this expedient seemed so desirable and so secure, he could also have foreseen the prison sentence, the loss of liberty and the destruction of his peace of mind, he would have resisted; but Nature deceived him, and he saw only two weeks ahead, instead of two years, which were nevertheless equally certain.

No wonder that all people are sinners, differing only in degree. The wonder is that men and women are as decent as so many of them are. Franklin

said that if people were as bad as they are with religion, what would they be without it? We need it because of our fundamental inclination toward folly.

Dr. George W. Crile, the famous surgeon, says that if we are to get out of people's minds the love of war, we must give them pictures that will appeal to their sentiments of horror rather than to their sentiments of glory. The wise doctor knows well enough that an appeal to reason is vain. He would substitute for the conventional battle pictures, which adorn the walls of so many pleasant rooms, pictures of reality. Instead of the famous painting showing the old man, the fifer, and the drummer boy, marching into battle with a glorified expression on their intelligent faces, he would have exhibited everywhere three men, one with his face shot off, another obscenely crippled, and the third insane. This is certainly an equally fair appeal to public sentiment.

There are zealous reformers who believe that the world can be changed here and now into Paradise. IF—but listen to one of the most earnest of them, H. G. Wells, who in 1918 wrote,

> I am a man who looks now towards the end of life, fifty-one years have I scratched off from my calendar, another slips by, and I cannot tell how many more of the sparse remainder of possible years are really mine. I live in days of hardship and privation, when it seems more natural to feel ill than well; without holidays or rest or peace; friends and the sons of my friends have been killed; the newspapers that

come in to my house tell mostly of blood and disaster, of drownings and slaughterings or of cruelties and base intrigues. Yet never have I been so sure that there is a divinity in man and that a great order of human life, a reign of justice and world-wide happiness, of plenty, power, hope, and gigantic creative effort, lies close at hand. Even now we have the science and the ability available for a universal welfare, though it is scattered about the world like a handful of money, dropped by a child, even now there exists all the knowledge that is needed to make mankind universally free and human life sweet and noble. We need but the courage to lay our hands upon it and in a little space of years it can be ours.

Every reformer, if he stops to think—many cannot wait for that—knows that connected with his beautiful scheme there is an enormous, a prodigious IF. The average reformer in politics, in education, in social or commercial affairs, is obsessed by the charm of a System, and forgets human nature. Jesus never forgot it.

There is no doubt that on many simple minds the Polyanna doctrine has an agreeably refreshing effect. Why is it that on more thoughtful minds it has just the opposite? Why is it that the Polyanna irritates where it should stimulate, confound where it should clarify? Nothing is more depressing than an all-embracing, light-hearted optimism. It is exasperating because we know it isn't true. The facts are otherwise. This is why some cynic defined an optimist as a fool unfamiliar with the facts. Every true philosophy, every true religion must recognise existing obstacles. What we need is not

to be told that the obstacle is not there; what we need is sufficient fortitude, inner strength, mental resource, and ultimate faith to meet and if possible, to overcome it.

Now Jesus, though he not only carried the remedy, but was himself the remedy, never underestimated the evil condition of the world or of human nature. He was a physician; and I have yet to meet a first-rate physician who is also an absolute optimist. Disease is no joke; the physician comes to fight a foe whose prowess has been sufficiently proved. His enemy cannot be dismissed with a smile, nor can a wise patient be by a smile set at ease; the doctor knows the contest will require all his skill and that he cannot be too adroit or resourceful.

The practical politician often triumphs over the reformer, alas, how often! because he knows the basis of human nature so much better. He is acquainted with the conditions, his knowledge having been sharpened by emolument. The reformer appeals only to reason, to the higher element in men; the practical politician deals with their greed, with their vanity, and distributes among his adherents tangible rewards. One calls upon their moral sense, the other distributes lucrative offices.

No better illustration of the difference between the skill of the reformer and that of the practical politician can be found than in the instance of Brutus and Cassius in Shakespeare's play. The

former was a high-minded gentleman, ignorant of human nature; the latter was a successful practical politician, who used for his ends not only the crowd, but Brutus himself. Thus between them they succeeded in killing the most useful man in the world. Brutus was for letting Mark Antony speak at the funeral, because Brutus believed in the cause and in the Roman mob; Cassius, who believed in neither, and who recognised Antony as a politician fully as adroit and unscrupulous as himself, was opposed to this. It is amusing to see the two ways in which Brutus and Cassius spoke to Mark Antony. When the latter talked with the two conspirators by the corpse of Caesar, Brutus said

> For your part,
> To you our swords have leaden points, Mark Antony:
> Our arms no strength of malice, and our hearts,
> Of brothers' temper, do receive you in
> With all kind love, good thoughts and reverence.

Cassius immediately added

> Your voice shall be as strong as any man's
> In the disposing of new dignities.

Jesus knew the strength of the forces he had come to fight, and he endeavoured to make his disciples understand them. He knew the conditions of life were hard, that human nature was bad, that it would be centuries and centuries before the world could be greatly improved. Much of his teaching was devoted to clearing the minds of his followers from the illusion of a speedy triumph. Undoubt-

edly the reason why his professional soldiers today, the Christian ordained priests and ministers, fail so often to be effective, is because they do not recognise the terrible gravity of the war in which they are engaged. It is essential that a minister have faith and courage; but to succeed, he must also have tact, resource, and a profound understanding of the heart of the average man. In other words, if one enters into the greatest of all conflicts, the fight for men's souls, one must surely be armed with something more than good intentions. Jesus did not under-estimate the difficulties when he said, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

The melancholy fact is that just as good may come out of evil, evil may come out of good. If a man shoots at a mad dog, and the bullet happens to pierce the heart of a bystander, the innocent man is as completely dead as if the shooter had meant to kill him. His beneficent intentions will not comfort the widow. In Browning's poem, *A Light Woman,* the man of the world who had attempted to save his young friend succeeded only in making the situation worse than before he began his interference, and the moral given is

It's an awkward thing to play with souls,

words that should be remembered by all teachers and preachers.

In Ibsen's desolating tragedy, *The Wild Duck,* the high-hearted reformer with the noblest idealism, and the best intentions, brings complete ruin into a household. It had been better for his victims if he had never been born.

It is fortunate that the courses of study in Protestant theological seminaries are so much closer to human life than they used to be. A minister should be a scholar, but the old curriculum was arranged on the theory that he would always preach to scholars. The minister must know the world and human nature. Caponsacchi said

> Priests
> Should study passion: how else cure mankind
> Who come for help in passionate extremes?

The best work of a minister is often done outside the pulpit. He is sitting in his library; there is a knock at the door: a woman enters with a desperate human problem of sin and sorrow, and asks his advice. If he has studied only Hebrew, Greek, New Testament interpretation, metaphysics, and church history, how is he prepared to meet this emergency?

As a class, Christian ministers, both Catholic and Protestant, are the finest types of humanity; they have unselfishness, generosity, piety, and faith. But these great gifts will be of no avail in their most important work unless they also have wisdom; yes, the very cunning of the serpent. The Catholic priest has perhaps more of this than the average

Protestant minister, because he is trained by men who know the world.

Jesus loved humanity; but he had a low opinion of the level of morality existing in his time. He knew that an advance in what is called civilisation did not necessarily include an advance in the spiritual life. He upbraided the cities.

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Jesus did not flatter national, local, or civic pride; the advance in culture ought to have brought with it an added sense of moral responsibility.

Jesus recognised the necessity of evil in the world; it was there because of the constitution of man and of society. It was natural. It would continue to exist centuries after his appearance.

It must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

The poor ye have always with you.

The true teacher has inexhaustible patience. He looks for no sudden miracle. He will sow and another will reap. This is the marked difference

between physicians of the body and physicians of the mind. The surgeon performs an operation, and in a short time he has the satisfaction of seeing his patient strong and healthy. The teacher and the preacher can only hope that perhaps in later years some of his work on some minds may possibly bear good fruit. The eternal obstacle is human nature.

There is a tone of unutterable sadness in these words:

> I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

Jesus was compelled to leave his disciples, as a dying mother leaves little children, at the mercy of strangers.

He was a man of sorrows, and *acquainted with grief*. Grief and not joy is the universal language; if you talk the speech of hilarity and cheerfulness, there are many who do not understand you, for there is so little in their lives corresponding to your mood. But everyone knows pain; everyone knows sorrow. Of all the realities in the world, there is no reality more evident than grief. Jesus was acquainted with it. He knew.

If his great heart could for a moment falter, is it surprising that we should so often live in darkness? Both Matthew and Mark report that during his agony on the cross he cried out the opening verse of the twenty-second psalm, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

This is astounding. It would be inexplicable were it not for the fact that it was necessary for him to taste not only the bitterness of bodily suffering, but the depths of mental anguish. He was spared nothing. For one moment, the current between him and God was broken; does it seem strange that God should often seem remote from us?

Despair is a human experience; but to live in despair is as unreasonable as to remain lying down when one is able to stand up. There is a pessimism that is as silly as the most unfounded optimism; the pessimism that says of life, "There is nothing in it." I once saw a picture of a human skull, and under it was the inscription, "What's the use?" There is a foolish saying, containing the essence of blind pessimism, "It will be all the same a hundred years from now." Such pessimism reduces life to a meaningless farce, the marvellous universe to an idle game of chance, and the mentality of the First Cause to that of an idiot. Such pessimism ends in intellectual paralysis.

Jesus never promised his disciples immunity from pain; but he gave them the inner fortitude necessary to bear it.

Healthy pessimism to the right mind is a challenge. For there is a healthy pessimism, which we should all feel; it is simply the honest, clear-sighted recognition of the facts of life.

The common problem, yours, mine, every one's,
Is—not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be,—but, finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
Up to our means: a very different thing!
No abstract intellectual plan of life
Quite irrespective of life's plainest laws,
But one, a man, who is man and nothing more,
May lead within a world which (by your leave)
Is Rome or London, not Fool's Paradise.

There is no good in pretending it is June when it is February; no good in insisting that the weather is clear when it is raining; no good in shouting to yourself that you are perfectly well when you have tuberculosis. Not only no good, but positively bad; for if your actions follow your pretences, you will descend into disaster. You must not drive your car on a bad road as though the roads were good; and you must not despair and stop driving; you must drive as well as you can on a bad road. Our duty is not to silence our knowledge by asserting that all is well when it is not, but to do the best we can with things as they are. In this way pessimism of a certain kind, by insisting on the truth, may minister to our progress.

In one of his novels, Leonard Merrick says, "No bland lie can be too preposterous to win wide approval. Say black is rose colour. Millions will smack their lips over the statement, and call the man who questions it a 'pessimist' . . . 'Pessimist' and 'optimist' are the two most misused words

in the English language." If healthy pessimism helps us to face actual obstacles, let us have more of it.

It is easier to face abuse and denunciation than it is to suffer misrepresentation; to have our words twisted from their proper meaning, to have our good purposes turned into evil by those who will not or who cannot understand. The honest teacher must face this too, be mentally prepared for it, be inwardly fortified against it. It is the way of the world to belittle and to destroy the beneficent influence of those who wish only to be of service. Satire is almost always directed against virtue, almost never against vice. Jesus knew all this; he knew that his golden words would arouse malicious opposition, deliberate misrepresentation, and that at best they would often be received with complete indifference.

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows.

And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

It was John's mission to convict the world of sin, and stir them to the desire for repentance; he had no time and no inclination for anything else; it

was fitting therefore that he should be aloof and austere, and not mingle with all classes of people. But Jesus spoke freely with everybody, high and low, rich and poor; he ate and drank what was set before him. He came to save; he knew that he could not be infected with sin, that his virtue was more contagious than disease. He therefore accepted invitations to dine with the tax-gatherers, with the well-to-do, and with the poorest of the poor. Evil companions could not hurt him and he cared not at all what hostile critics might say. Let them make of it what they pleased. He went on his way, willing to stop, dine, and talk with anyone. No one ever denounced some of the Pharisees more uncompromisingly than Jesus; but he did not hesitate to accept an invitation to dinner in a Pharisee's house.

It was while he was at table in the luxurious home of Simon the Pharisee, that one of the most beautiful incidents in his career took place. To me it is not surprising that he accepted the dinner invitation; what amazes me is that he should have received it. He taught Simon a good lesson both in democracy and in virtue.

While he was at dinner, a woman of the streets came in with an alabaster box of precious ointment, probably bought with the wages of sin, and stood at the feet of Jesus, weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed

them with the ointment. Jesus calmly accepted this tribute as he had accepted the invitation of the Pharisee; but Simon was shocked, and thought that Jesus must be ignorant indeed not to recognise the character and profession of the woman who anointed him. Should not the moral teacher rebuke sinners? But Jesus, who knew the hearts of both the harlot and the Pharisee, said that one had given him a formal invitation to dinner, but that the other had kissed him and washed his feet with her tears. Jesus did not here any more than elsewhere make light of sin. The woman's sins were "many," but "she loved much." She was redeemed, as was the younger son in the famous parable, because he responded to love; but how can Simon be redeemed, if he feels no need of forgiveness?

And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath *saved* thee; go in peace. Let us hope that Simon the Pharisee, who had invited Jesus to his house out of curiosity, learned enough through one he had not invited to see the truth.

What did Jesus mean by the statement, "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me"? Kent translates the passage, "Blessed is the man who does not lose faith in me." Ballantine: "Blessed is he who does not mistake regarding me." Robinson Smith: "And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me."

It would seem at first sight that even those who refused and refuse to believe in Jesus would

not be offended in him; that is, could not be made worse by him, could not be made to stumble and go wrong. But history proves that Jesus knew that not only would there be many who would be angered, that is "offended" in the common modern meaning, by his teaching, but that many would actually be led astray. "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." What happened? Enemies sought his life and finally succeeded in crucifying him. Today he has numerous and powerful antagonists whom he seems to goad into ever more active opposition. In Artsybashev's novel, *Sanin,* his spokesman and hero declares, "Christianity has played an abominable role in history, and the name of Jesus Christ will for some time yet oppress humanity like a curse." A Christian today must be blind who does not see that the followers of Christ must reckon not only with polite agnosticism and selfish indifference, but with open, active, remorseless and unscrupulous hostility. It is war to the knife, as it ever has been since Jesus entered the world. He came not to bring peace, but a sword; he divided men and women sharply into opposite camps. He knew that the principle of active love would be a cause of offense, and would bring out all the latent opposition that exists in human nature. Blessed is he who is not offended in me; who receives me gladly and unreservedly. And blessed is he who does not misunderstand me.

And with the knowledge that the Christian Church has everywhere implacable foes, what is it doing? Why, it is fighting a civil war—fundamentalists against modernists, and all of them professed followers of the Head. Can't we reconcile ourselves with our own brothers, while the enemy is at the gate?

Walking in Munich one day, I saw a shoemaker's sign; his name was

CHRISTIAN RUMPUS

I immediately went in, and told him that his name would be an admirably accurate description of many a Christian Church.

Jesus foresaw not only the malignant opposition of his foes, but the internal jealousies and tragic quarrels among his followers. The twelve disciples fought among themselves as to who should be the greatest in the new kingdom; the mother of two made the preposterous demand that her sons sit respectively on the right and on the left, which I think must have caused our Lord actual amusement. The early churches, as we learn from Paul's letters, had on their rolls plenty of hypocrites and gross sinners; the solemn sacrament was turned into a disreputable banquet, where church members got drunk at the Communion table. The Christian Church in the twentieth century is by no means perfect; but it is enormously superior to the early Apostolic church. Jesus knew that all these things

must be, because they were inherent in human nature; and he knew the hearts of men and women. He knew that Thomas would doubt him, that Peter would deny him, that John would desert him, that Judas would betray him. He had no illusions.

It is worse than futile for those of us who are church members, who have enlisted in Christ's service, to be offended in him, when today more than ever the world abounds in his active foes. Those who find his gospel of love inconsistent with their desires are so offended in him that they are openly trying to destroy Christianity. Personally I welcome this fight; open hostility has somehow always been good for the church. As the French Revolutionists abolished Christianity by law, so the Russian Revolutionists are trying to drive it out of Russian territory and out of the minds of the governing proletariat. They are at all events honest enough to recognise the incompatibility of the teachings of Jesus with their own political theories. If Trotzky has been correctly reported, and I saw what follows in an apparently authoritative statement, he has declared that the true revolutionist must not stick at arson and murder, for he can win only by ruthless violence. He must therefore be an atheist, for what he does will certainly be contrary to the teachings of religion. This is refreshingly candid. Furthermore, I believe the Christian church all over the world has profited by the Soviet persecution of Christian priests, and especially by

the bold and brave behaviour of those priests when brought face to face with death.

Some of the parables and the sayings of Jesus at first sight seem positively cruel, but upon reflexion we see that they are no more cruel than life. They represent to his disciples and followers the facts of life, so that they may not be taken unawares, not thrown into confusion by a surprise attack. In the story of the five wise and five foolish virgins, given only by Matthew, observe that all ten had their lamps brightly burning; but the wise carried *extra oil* in vessels, in order to be prepared for emergencies. It was the reserve against the possibility of delay that made exactly the difference between wisdom and folly; and it was the cruel test that made the difference between success and disaster. In the parable of the talents, also given only by Matthew, the man with one talent did nothing, and was lost. As a boy, I remember how hotly I resented our Lord's saying "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have in abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." It was only after I grew up and began to learn something about the rules of life that I saw how absolutely true this harsh statement is. Again in the parable of the labourers, once more told only by Matthew, I shared the resentment of those who had worked all day when they received no more than they who had worked only one hour. But such is the way of life.

If men agree to work for a certain sum, they may not like it when they see others who have worked less receive just as much; but their business is not with others, but with the man who hired them. So our reference—if we would have peace of mind—should never be to our neighbours and friends, but only to God and his will. Inequality is the law of life. In the last chapter of John's gospel, Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" And Jesus frankly told him it was none of his business. "What is that to thee? follow thou me." When I was young, another youth and I were competitors in a certain struggle. I thought I ought to be awarded the prize, but it was given to my rival. I was in deep distress for some days. On Sunday I decided to go to church, but came in late. I entered as the minister was reading the lesson, and just as I came inside the building, I heard these words, "Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him. If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." My bitterness and resentment departed.

Jesus meant to show church-members that they were not to indulge in rivalry with each other, but were simply to follow him.

Unlike most reformers, who work for the passage of new laws that shall restrain men from vice, and who seek to put their own personal opinions into the constitution of their country, Jesus paid little attention to laws and none at all to politics.

He knew that under any government the poor would be always with us, that sin and disease would abound. Jesus refrained from political activity, and can be claimed by no political party. He was sufficiently pessimistic to know that under a monarchical or under a Bolshevist régime, sorrow and pain would everywhere meet the eye. He dealt not with governments, laws, and parties, but solely with the individual human heart. A man might be a centurion and yet a Christian; a man might be a publican and yet a Christian; a man might be a church member, yes, even one of the chosen twelve disciples, and yet not be a Christian. It is well to conform to the existing government and be obedient to the civil law, and it is well to follow the prevailing fashions in externals and think no more about it. The supreme thing is to give the heart to God.

When Jesus was on earth, his enemies, knowing that in all communities the State is supreme, and that the surest way to ruin is to oppose the government, for no man is in so great personal danger as a political heretic, endeavoured to draw from him some statement that might be construed as an incendiary attack on the existing political order; to make him a rebel against the Roman Emperor.

And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians (church and state working together) to catch him in his words.

And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we

know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?

Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.

And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.

And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

Pay your income tax honestly, and love God with all your heart. No doubt among those who listened to him there were many parlour patriots, who cheated the government they professed to serve. Patriotism makes more hypocrites than religion.

Christian ministers should always remember this incident. Those who are forever preaching politics make a fundamental error; let the newspapers and the party leaders talk politics, and let the ministers preach the gospel. It may be that some governments need to be changed, and that at times some need even a revolution; but no political change or revolution is ever so necessary as the revolution in the individual heart, the new birth.

Before his death and resurrection, Jesus looked into the future. He saw the long centuries of sin, oppression, greed, selfishness and war. Amid this circle of hostility, his disciples must keep the faith with steadfast hearts; they would suffer, but they would have that inward peace of mind which

enables one to withstand enmity and pain. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

The honest, clear-sighted recognition of the forces of evil and pain is the best preparation to fight them. One may then be assailed, but one cannot be bewildered. Jesus would be saddened by the European spectacle today, but he would be neither shocked nor surprised.

Alfred Noyes told the following story. In the midst of the World War, an enormous crowd was gathered near Charing Cross to welcome the returning wounded British soldiers. First came those who were slightly wounded; they were bandaged, but could walk. They were greeted with cheers. Then came those who seemed drunken or insane: they suffered from shell-shock. Then came the closed ambulances, containing the desperately wounded. The crowd was silent. At that moment of intense and universal stillness, two men held aloft an enormous sign, where all could see it; and on this sign was printed

COME UNTO ME, ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY-LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST.

V

THE BETRAYAL, THE DEATH, THE RESURRECTION

The Best Reason for Believing in God—Force and Love—Christianity a Personal Religion—Following a Leader—The Word Made Flesh—The Traitor—Various Modern Interpretations of Judas—Was He a Hero?—Meaning of Iscariot—The Prophecy of Betrayal and the Assertion of Peter—Naturalness of His Denial—The Circumstances—The Other Disciple—The Garden of Gethsemane—Watch and Pray—Reason for the Divine Agony—The Soldiers—The Preliminary and the Second Trial—Real Character of Pilate—Pilate's Humane Attitude and Love of Fair Play—Herod and the Thunder—Pilate's Wife—The Kingdom of God—What is Truth? Was Pilate a Jester?—The Mystery Plays—Where Do You Come From?—The Inscription—Last Days of Pilate—The Procession to the Cross—The Words to the Weeping Women—The Passion Play at Oberammergau—The Two Thieves—The Seven Sayings—The Witnesses at the Cross—John and Mary—Supreme Importance of the Resurrection.

V

THE BETRAYAL, THE DEATH, THE RESURRECTION

Jesus had frequently spoken to his twelve disciples about his coming death and its necessity; but they naturally did not understand him, any more than they understood the nature of his kingdom. The four evangelists differ from one another in the details that they give and that they omit in his teaching and in his career; but all four describe the crucifixion and the resurrection. In the intimate and beautiful conversation between Jesus and the twelve at the last supper, Jesus said to them, as reported by John,

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

If this is a correct translation from the Greek, I should like to reverse the order of the last two clauses. I do not believe in Christ because I believe in God; I believe in God because I believe in Jesus. It is only through the life and sayings of Jesus that I find my way to God. Even if I did not believe in the Christian revelation, I should still believe

in some Supreme Force; but that is as far as my mind could take me, and my heart could not follow even so far as that. That there is some Infinite and Eternal Energy from which the universe has come, seems sufficiently clear; but the evidences of beneficence, of forethought, of good will to man in that Energy are not sufficient to convince me. I should acquiesce in the existence of that Power, but while admiring its Strength and its Intelligence, I could not honestly worship It. For in order to get my worship, Power must have something besides those two qualities. I will not worship anything or vote for anything simply because it is stronger and cleverer than I. It must also be better.

By observation of natural phenomena, by the reading of history and the study of philosophy, we may arrive at the conclusion that there is a Supreme Power; but the evidence of the Goodness of that Power is lacking. It is through the revelation in Jesus Christ that I obtain, and there *alone,* a reasonable belief that God is not only Strength and Intelligence, but Love. If the evidences of Divine Love were clear in a study of natural history and of humanity, then Jesus would not be necessary; he would have lived and died in vain; the Gospel would not only have been no good news, it would not even be news. But Jesus, who is the only person in history who seems like God, expressly declared his unique purpose in appearing on earth to be the revelation of God's love. Therefore I

mean it literally when I say, I believe in Christ, I believe also in God.

But I do not think Jesus said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." I think he said, "Believe in God, believe also in me." Have faith in God, have faith also in me, his representative, his ambassador.

We cannot emphasise too strongly the fact that Christianity is a personal religion. The gateway to Christianity is not through an intricate labyrinth of dogma, but by a simple belief in the person of Christ. Leave dogma to those who enjoy it; the true Christian is simply a member of Christ's society, of his party, one of his followers. I cannot understand the nature of the Infinite Energy; but I can follow Jesus Christ, because he took the form of a young man, and we have the story of his life, actions, and words. I think he was wiser and better than Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, or Theodore Roosevelt; I find it easier to be a Christian partisan than to be a Republican or Democrat. I have more faith in the practical wisdom and knowledge of Jesus than I have in that of Julius Caesar or of any statesman, soldier or philosopher. He had more common sense than any person I ever saw, heard, or read of; he was the most independent and the most courageous individual of whom we have any record. In his service there is freedom.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. God speaks

to me not through the thunder and the earthquake, not through the ocean and the stars, but through the Son of Man, and speaks in a language adapted to my imperfect sight and hearing. I want to follow the Best I know, and here it is. If any one can show me anything better, I will follow that.

Just as there are traitors now in the church, there were from the beginning. One of the twelve will be forever infamous. The worst insult you can offer any man on earth is to call him Judas. Browning said that Judas lived alone in hell for nearly seventeen hundred years, because there was no one among the damned who would speak to him. They all considered themselves his social superiors.

It is natural, given the love of opposition that characterises certain minds, that there have been from time to time attempts to make Judas into a hero. Some say he was the finest of the twelve, because he knew that the Divine Sacrifice could not be accomplished without betrayal; he therefore incurred eternal damnation in order to make the event possible. Others say he was the only one of the twelve who honestly believed in the Divinity of Christ; that he arranged for the betrayal, being confident that when the High Priests and the soldiers seized Jesus, he would manifest his Supreme Power, and establish his kingdom. When he failed to do this, and was led away like any other criminal, under ignominious arrest, Judas was heartbroken; he went to the chief priests and elders, said that

Jesus was an innocent man, and then in utter despair at the loss of his faith rather than in repentance for his sin, went and hanged himself. The fact that he threw the money down showed that he did not want it; furthermore, he had the bag, was Treasurer, and could have helped himself at any time.

All this is ingenious, but it is to consider too curiously. It is not particularly surprising that there should be among twelve men one traitor. Judas handling the funds, loved money, was offended in Jesus, despised his teaching of unselfishness, betrayed him for silver, kissed him like the traitor he was, and repented, like other criminals, after the deed was done. Nothing was left for him. He had lost his Master, lost the friendship of his eleven companions, and was despised by the priests with whom he had made his bargain.

The surname Iscariot probably alludes to the town or place he originally came from, and it is likely that Judas was the only one of the twelve men who was not a Galilean. In mediaeval legend he had red hair and beard; no one who has seen the Passion Play at Oberammergau within the last thirty-five years can forget the fiery-headed Judas and the marvellous realism of his acting. In olden times it was dangerous for any one of the villagers to take this role; he became identified with it so that it seriously affected his worldly prosperity. But the inhabitants of Oberammergau, with the enormous

inrush of foreign visitors, grew so sophisticated that they became proud of their Judas, as well they might be.

From the very start Jesus seemed to be aware of the defection of Judas, for in the sixth chapter of John, at the conclusion of his sermon on the Spiritual Life, Jesus said, "there are some of you that believe not." This statement is followed by the explanatory remark, "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." Like all leaders, he constantly won new disciples, but he did not succeed in keeping them all. I suppose every day there were recruits and every day deserters. In the sermon just mentioned, when he made the audacious statement that no man could come to him except through the Father, many in the audience believing either that such words were blasphemy or else that the speaker was a deluded fanatic, left him forever. Such preaching had such results. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

It was then that Peter spoke out loud and bold. Jesus watching with sorrow the retreating deserters, turned to the twelve, and asked, Will ye also go away? Peter answered with a question: To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. The question is still pertinent and should be considered by all doubting followers. To whom shall we go? What other guide is better or wiser?

Jesus answered Peter's assurance with the tragic remark, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

It would seem that Judas had plenty of warning, every opportunity to change his treacherous plot, and to remain steadfast. He must have remembered the words of Jesus and the expression on the Teacher's face as he uttered them, remembered them after the deed with such agony of mind that he could not endure himself.

Peter was the most impetuous and the most talkative of the twelve; and although Jesus seemed at times cruel to him, hurting his pride in the presence of the others with words that cut like a whiplash, and humbling him almost beyond endurance, we may be sure that the impulsive apostle was close to his Master's heart. Every one of the disciples had conspicuous faults. Why should it be surprising that that very human institution, the Christian Church, should be so far from perfection, when the twelve, who lived every day with Jesus, were so full of flaws, fears, selfish pride, doubts, and sins? They disputed who should be greatest; and they all forsook him at just the moment when he needed them the most.

On the evening of the betrayal, Jesus told them that he could not count on the loyalty of a single one. Peter spoke up briskly, and said that if every one else deserted Jesus, he at least would stand firm; to which expression of trust Jesus informed

him that on that very night Peter would deny him three times. Remember always that these accounts of the shameful cowardice and treachery of the twelve were not written by the enemies of Christianity, but by its friends.

Peter's denial is human. Let him who has always expressed unpopular opinions in the presence of a bloodthirsty mob, cast the first stone at Cephas. Jesus was arrested as a dangerous agitator, and the crowd was shouting for his death. When the girl singled out Peter, and in the presence of the mob accused him of being identified with the prisoner, Peter instinctively denied it. This does not mean that he had lost faith in Jesus; it means simply that he was afraid, horribly afraid, and spoke the words dictated to him by fear, as the average man in an emergency will always do. Then another girl repeated the charge, and Peter, white with terror, swore that he did not even know the man. Then the crowd gathered around him, denounced him, insisted that he was "one of them," because his accent, even in denial, proved it. Peter protested, cursed, swore, shouted, raved, shrieked his innocence, and while he was indulging in these imprecations and asseverations, he was interrupted by the crowing of the cock, more accusing than any of the threats of man. He burst into sobs of shame and grief.

This denial by Peter was a natural reaction following two deeds of desperate courage, in which he

showed himself braver than any other of the twelve. When he saw his Master arrested, he struck at one of the servants of the high priest, meaning to split his skull; he cut off his ear. A few moments later, he ran away with the others; but repenting of this cowardice, he followed Jesus afar off into the high priest's palace, among the very servants whom he had attacked with his sword. His overstrained courage then gave out.

All four gospels mention the denial by Peter, and all four the attack on Malchus, the servant of the high priest; but only John gives the name of the disciple and of the victim, and John adds that he also followed into the court with Peter. He calls Peter's companion "another disciple," but it is plain whom he means. There is an ugly passage there (John XVIII: 16) which looks as if the "other disciple" deliberately got Peter into trouble with the crowd, while he himself was apparently safe. There was more jealousy than love among the twelve.

In the garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus asked his disciples to *watch,* he meant by the word merely to stay awake. From this time the terrible loneliness of Jesus is accentuated. Every man must die alone; but not every man must die in the presence of taunting enemies. Jesus took with him to a remote part of the garden the three disciples who were closest to him, Peter and James and John; and feeling his appalling fate approaching, he told them of his agony of mind, and asked these three to stay

awake with him, that he might feel their conscious presence. But they fell asleep, and although twice awakened and admonished, they fell asleep again. Then Jesus in prayer uttered those strange words, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." No one can read his mind; but I suppose it was not the physical anguish of the beating, scourging, and crucifixion that shook his heart, frightful as that was, but the all but intolerable ignominy. The Son of God, conscious of his divinity, must be humiliated, insulted, treated with derisive laughter by a rabble—such suffering is simply beyond human comprehension. The nearest approach our imagination can reach is to picture oneself humiliated by something lower than the lowest insect.

Perhaps, too, the weight of the sins of the world oppressed his spirit.

In the darkness of the night came a noisy crowd of armed soldiers and servants of the high priest, some of them carrying lanterns and torches, and all following Judas. In the flickering light he kissed his Master, who was immediately arrested. Then followed the incident of Malchus, although only Luke mentions that Jesus healed him. It was his last deed of mercy and physical healing before the resurrection. Jesus remonstrated with the soldiers for coming out against him with swords and staves, as though he were a dangerous criminal who would show fight. He reminded them that he could easily

have been arrested at any time; that he never concealed the nature of his teaching.

Only Mark mentions a young man, wrapped in a linen cloth, who was among the followers of Jesus. At the time of the arrest, he was seized by the mob, but he wriggled out of the loose garment and ran away naked. Some think that this young follower was Mark himself, basing this supposition on the fact of the incident being uniquely mentioned in Mark's gospel.

Jesus was led into the palace of the high priest, and a preliminary trial was immediately held. He had completely recovered the composure temporarily lost in the garden. He answered nothing to the accusations of two false witnesses; but in response to the direct question of the high priest, he affirmed that he was in truth the Son of God. Delighted with this admission, although pretending to be shocked, the priest called on the mob to pronounce the verdict, who, like all mobs, gathered against one man, clamoured for his death. They mocked him, struck him, and spit in his face.

The second trial occurred the next morning, and was before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, whom every one feared except Jesus. Pilate could not possibly have been the spineless, irresolute weakling so often represented. The Romans did not send out that kind of a man to rule their provinces. He was a Roman, contemptuous of the Jews and of the rabble; a common-sensible, bold, resolute

man. He cared nothing for their theology or their religion, nothing for anything except the honour and power of Rome, which he represented in a distant and despised territory. The Passion Play at Oberammergau presents him convincingly; a splendid, masculine, authoritative Roman ruler, who is plainly bored by the clamour of the mob, and who cannot find any reason why Jesus should be killed or even arrested. In response to the crowd's accusations of blasphemy, he, like a true representative of the Law, says, What has he done? *Was hat er gethan?*

The serenity of Jesus in the presence of this pack of wild beasts immensely impressed Pilate, who unquestionably had deep in his heart a secret admiration for the prisoner. Had Jesus made any defence, it is certain that Pilate would never have given him over to death. But the behaviour of the accused seemed finally to convince Pilate that he was some visionary, some fanatic, who although innocent of any crime, might as well be put out of the way, especially as the populace seemed so determined on his execution. The surprising thing to me is not that Pilate permitted him to be crucified, but that he strove so hard and so long to prevent it. He evidently gave much more attention to this case than to that of any ordinary malefactor. He was fascinated by Jesus, and returned to him again and again, questioning him; he repeatedly urged the mob, insisting himself on the innocence of Jesus, to

take Barabbas, who was a convicted murderer and agitator.

Only Luke mentions that Jesus was tried before King Herod. The accusers told Pilate that Jesus was seditious; that he refused to give tribute to Caesar (directly contrary to the truth) and that he called himself a king. Pilate had asked him if he were really the King of the Jews, and Jesus had affirmed it. This probably amused Pilate rather than shocked or angered him, for he immediately said both to the priests and to the people that he could find no fault in this man. But they answered that he had stirred up all the populace from Galilee southward; and when Pilate heard the name Galilee, he sent him to Herod, who happened at that moment to be in Jerusalem; for Galilee was in Herod's territory.

The frivolous Herod was delighted when he saw Jesus, for he had heard of him as a wonder-maker, and hoped now that Jesus would display for him some of the tricks of a magician. But when Herod has asked him many questions, and got nothing out of him but a contemptuous silence, he began to laugh scornfully and egged on the soldiers to maltreat him. In mockery he arrayed Jesus in a gorgeous robe, and derisively sent him thus clad back to Pilate. Both the king and the governor were pleased at this exchange of courtesy, and their former enmity was turned into friendship.

In the mediaeval mystery plays, Herod was rep-

resented as a boaster, ranter, and man of violence. He "raged" up and down the stage, and often in the street around it; so that his name became a symbol for bluster. He was a comic figure and often amused the spectators with juggling feats. When today the drum-major precedes his band, throwing his stick in the air, and catching it again, he is in the straight line of tradition from the Herod of the Mysteries. When Hamlet, in his advice to the players was counselling them to act and talk naturally, to avoid rant, saying of such exaggerations "it out-herods Herod," he was making a direct allusion to the theatrical rather than to the historical Herod. In the passion play at Oberammergau, Herod is represented as a conceited jester, who asks questions of Jesus in mockery. When I first saw this drama in 1890, an incident happened which was not planned, but which made a thrilling impression on the audience. It was a sultry, showery, thunderous day; at the exact moment when Herod looked at Jesus and asked him tauntingly if he were a king, Jesus looked silently toward heaven; and at the instant there was a tremendous, reverberating crash of thunder. It seemed like an answering affirming voice.

Only Matthew mentions Pilate's wife. When Pilate was actually on the seat of judgment, there came a message from her, imploring him to save Jesus. She had had a dream, and had suffered much because of it. Matthew is also the only evan-

gelist who mentions the famous washing of hands by Pilate, by which he dismissed the responsibility for the crime of killing an innocent man. The Jews accepted this transferred responsibility, shouting, "His blood be on us, and on our children," which remark caused manifold persecutions and cruelties in the centuries that were to come.

After Jesus had been sent back to Pilate by Herod, the Roman called the chief priests and the Jewish men of influence together, and said that both he and the king had separately examined Jesus to see if he were really a dangerous agitator guilty of crime; they both could find no fault in him of any kind, and nothing dangerous to the state. Pilate therefore offered to punish him and release him. It seemed to be the custom to release one prisoner at the annual feast, and Pilate, who did not want to crucify Jesus, hoped that the crowd would be satisfied with some torture like scourging, and not insist on the death penalty. But the crowd yelled that Barabbas must be released, who was not only a murderer, but a leader of sedition, which fact stultified their apparent concern for the State in their demonstration of Jesus. Three times Pilate urged the crowd to allow him to release Jesus, but the mob was after the blood of the Galilean, and nothing else would satisfy them.

I repeat that what seems strange to me was not Pilate yielding to the mob, for what did that hard-hearted and callous Roman care for a friendless

enthusiast? but rather it seems strange that he strove so hard and so long to save him.

In the Fourth Gospel, which differs in some details from the others in its account of the circumstances leading up to the crucifixion, but agrees with them in emphasising Pilate's reluctance to have Christ crucified, there is an impressive account of a conversation between the Roman governor and the prisoner. After talking outside with the priests, Pilate returned to the judgment-hall, and asked Jesus if he were the king of the Jews. To this he received a contemptuous reply, which, instead of enraging the Roman, merely deepened his interest, and he asked, What hast thou done? meaning, Won't you explain to me why your own nation are determined to destroy you? To which Jesus replied,

> My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.
>
> Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.
>
> Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?

Francis Bacon wrote, "What is truth? said jesting Pilate." But I do not believe that Pilate was jesting. He was grave, dignified, and in great perplexity; there was something in the absolute serenity of the prisoner, in the directness of his gaze, and in

the majesty of his countenance, that appealed to the Roman, who like all his race, admired courage, constancy, and dominion. Jesus was evidently no ordinary fanatic and surely not a malefactor. Whatever the expression on Pilate's face, it was far from jocose. But in the mediaeval mystery plays, which Bacon was as familiar with as was Shakespeare, Pilate was often represented as a jester; and I feel certain that it was from that source that Bacon got his conception of this passage.

Pilate, the practical man, probably asked the question impatiently, as if to say, "Oh, don't talk about truth; don't you know you are in danger? What good is truth in this emergency?"

At all events, the conversation strengthened his liking for Jesus; and once more he went to the Jews, and told them that Jesus was innocent. But, finding them implacable, he had Jesus scourged, a horribly cruel torture, and the callous soldiers, whose eyes had often looked unmoved on scenes of agony and suffering, pleased themselves by tormenting and playing with the friendless prisoner. They crushed a crown of thorns on his head, they dressed him in royal purple, and were prodigiously amused in saluting him as King of the Jews. Matthew adds that the soldiers put a reed in his hand, in burlesque of a sceptre, and that they also beat him with this. He was treated with every indignity, and the idle garrison soldiers kept up their brutal and brutalising sport until they were tired.

Even after this, Pilate made one more attempt to save Jesus. He asserted again that Jesus was innocent; then he came back to the suffering man, and asked him in bewilderment, Whence art thou? This seems a strange question, but it was probably spoken not with any desire for information, but merely in wonder. What kind of a person are you, and where do you come from, you, who endure all these things with such unshaken composure? Jesus remained silent, whereupon Pilate reminded him that he, Pilate, had complete power over him. Jesus replied coldly that Pilate could have no power at all, except as God permitted it. Curiously, this challenge made Pilate more eager to set him free; but this time the Jews threatened to use his clemency against him, claiming that mercy toward Jesus would be a proof of disloyalty to the Roman emperor. Pilate, who like most Roman governors, had done many things that would not bear investigation, finally yielded to the mob.

John says that Pilate wrote the title placed over the head of Jesus on the cross, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Both John and Luke say that it was written in three languages, Hebrew, Greek, Latin. Luke makes the inscription read, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Mark puts it, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Matthew, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. John says that the chief priests felt insulted by the title, and requested Pilate to

change it from a statement of fact to a claim by the sufferer. But Pilate, who was angry with the Jews for driving him into a deed repugnant to him, answered with Roman curtness, What I have written I have written. The last we hear of Pilate is his granting the request of Joseph of Arimathea (mentioned in all four gospels) for the body of Jesus, that it might have honourable burial. Mark adds that when Pilate was informed that Jesus was already dead, he was amazed; because crucifixion was usually a slow death. He was not convinced until he had obtained proof of it from the centurion. On the next day, Saturday, Matthew tells us that the chief priests came to Pilate and reminded him that the impostor had claimed that in three days he would rise. They asked him therefore to make sure that the sepulchre remain intact. Pilate gave them the necessary permission; they sealed the stone, and put men on guard. Only Matthew mentions this sealing of the tomb.

The fact that Pilate gave orders for the crucifixion only with the greatest reluctance, was alluded to later by Peter (Acts III, 13): "whom ye delivered up and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go." I wish we knew more about the subsequent history of Pilate. He ruled as governor from the year 26 to 36. He had more than once shown himself stern, cruel, and corrupt. We learn (only from Luke XIII, 1) that he had treated the Galileans with ruth-

less severity, probably on the occasion of some uprising. From Josephus we hear that he took treasure from the temple to build an aqueduct, and he had no compunction in other dealings with the Jews. He finally carried things with such a high hand that Vitellius, governor of Syria, had him recalled to Rome to answer serious charges. After that he disappears from history: but one tradition says he committed suicide in the reign of Caligula, while another states that he was banished by Caligula to Gaul, where he died in the year 41.

It was the custom—a refinement of cruelty—to compel anyone who was to be crucified to carry his cross on the way to the place of execution: but Matthew, Mark, and Luke state that a certain bystander, Simon of Cyrene, was forced into this service by the soldiers. John said that Jesus bore the cross himself and it is probable that he started on the journey with that tragic burden. Only Luke tells us of a dramatic incident on the road.

> And there followed him a great number of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.
>
> But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.
>
> For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the paps which never gave suck.
>
> Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

This scene is one of the most overwhelming of all the terrible spectacles in the Passion Play. There were over seven hundred people on the stage. The mob were howling and yelling at Jesus, and the little boys, picking up stones to throw at him, shouted, "To the cross with the Galilean!" A group of women followed directly after Jesus, sobbing aloud. Suddenly Jesus stopped, and turned around. The whole turbulent crowd became silent, and there was an unspeakably impressive pause, like a momentary calm in the midst of a raging storm. In this strange silence, the pale and blood-stained sufferer spoke the fearful words recorded by Luke.

All four evangelists state that there were two nameless ones crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. But only Luke tells us what they said. One of these hardened criminals sarcastically suggested that Jesus save all three of them. But the other, evidently impressed by the manner of the Saviour, rebuked his comrade for his coarseness, saying that the two thieves were justly punished, but that Jesus had done nothing wrong. Then twisting his head toward the Light of the World, he uttered those immortal words, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Perhaps Jesus never received a greater tribute. Dying in ignominy on the cross, amid the laughter

and railing of the spectators, this wretched companion of his torment did homage to the King.

Mark says that just before the crucifixion they offered him a drink of wine mingled with myrrh, probably to deaden his anguish; but he declined it.

The seven sayings of Jesus on the cross are collected from the testimony of the four evangelists. Only Matthew and Mark record, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* which is the only saying mentioned by these two. Luke alone gives three: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,* and *Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise,* and *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.* Only John gives the command to his mother and to the disciple that they should regard themselves as mother and son henceforth. Also, the statement, *I thirst* and the last word, *It is finished.*

Jesus was crucified about nine o'clock in the morning, though John makes it later in the day; from twelve to three there was darkness; perhaps the sky was heavily overcast; and shortly after that Jesus died, so that he remained living on the cross about six hours. The mocking and raillery of the crowd during his suffering is not mentioned by John, but appears in the other three evangelists, who also mention the testimony of the Roman centurion in his acknowledgment of the divinity of Jesus. Only John mentions the breaking of the legs of the thieves, which presumably means beating their bodies until life was extinct; also the piercing of the

side of Jesus with the spear. All four evangelists state that there were women watching the crucifixion, but John has them standing directly by the cross. It is his testimony alone that is responsible for the *Stabat Mater*.

In the whole story of Jesus Christ, the most important event is the Resurrection. Christian faith depends on this. It is encouraging to know that it is explicitly given by all four evangelists, and told also by Paul. The names of those who saw him after his triumph over death are recorded; and it may be said that the historical evidence for the Resurrection is stronger than for any other miracle anywhere narrated.

There are in the New Testament five chapters which are the most jubilant, the most triumphant, the most awakening of all written language. These are the last chapters of Matthew, Mark, Luke, the twentieth chapter of John, and the fifteenth chapter of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. All five assert both positively and definitely that the King of Terrors was defeated by the King of Kings. After the darkness of the crucifixion, the climax of the world's greatest tragedy, comes the supremely happy story of the risen Lord. It is like unto the blackness of a stormy night followed by the radiant glory of an April morning. To every believer, the great day in the year should be Easter; and as it ushers in new life to the grass and the

trees, so it should fill every human heart with the light of sunrise. Our faith in God, in Christ, in Life itself, is based on the Resurrection; for as Paul said, if Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain.

VI

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

Law and Grace—Doing and Being—Negative and Positive—The Authority of Jesus—The Source of Conduct—Conversations of Jesus With the Lawyers —The Vital Question and the Answer—The Quotation from the Mosaic Law—Rules and Personality—Love Greater Than Duty—Love More Than Honour—The Spy—Ibsen and a Doll's House—Sister Beatrice—Paradoxes—Emphasis in Teaching—The Darkness of Truth—Literal Interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount—The Revolution of the Spirit —A Positive Religion—Why Is Virtue Unattractive? —Bad Advertisements of Religion—Strindberg—The Prodigal Son—The Elder Brother's Crime—Christian Righteousness Must Exceed the Righteousness of Morality—A Good Young Man?—The Matchless Opportunity—The Personal Charm of Jesus—Oscar Wilde—Ibsen and the Master-Builder—Seventy Times Seven—Going to Church—The Mother and Son—Love the Great Preservative—Love Your Enemies—Who is the Real Fool?—Irresistible Drawing Power of Love.

VI

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

In the first chapter of the Gospel according to John, we read, *For the Law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

Unless I totally misunderstand the significance of this text, it implies that Jesus brought something into the world that took the place of the law by fulfilling it, by a superior substitution. All that is of value in the Law is *assumed* in Christianity. The ten commandments, mainly prohibitions, were necessary rules to keep people straight, to show the way to right conduct. The Beatitudes look at morality from a different angle; they show the way to happiness. The ten commandments answer the questions *What must I and what must I not do?* The Beatitudes answer the question, *What must I be?* The difference between the two is the profound difference between the external and the internal. Jesus dealt directly with the source of conduct—the human heart.

Jesus always spoke with the tone of authority. He never hesitated to compare or even to contrast his doctrine with that of the Old Testament. He knew his ideas marked an advance on the law and the Prophets. "Before Abraham was, I am." "Ye

search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me; but ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." Jesus knew the Old Testament from beginning to end, for he had been thoroughly grounded in it from his early youth; he quoted from it with respect; but in him salvation changed from the future to the present tense.

If the source is pure, the stream from which it flows will be pure. The Law said, Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery. Jesus said, Thou shalt have honest thoughts: thou shalt have kindly thoughts: thou shalt have chaste thoughts. It is often possible to evade the Law, but no one can evade himself.

Everything that Jesus did and said is interesting; and it is particularly interesting to observe the questions that were put to him by learned men and the answers they received. The Scribes or Lawyers were professional students of the Jewish law, and understood not only its moral precepts, but its formal rites and ceremonies. The original language, Hebrew, had given place to the vernacular, Aramaic; there were innumerable texts in the body of the Law that might be variously interpreted; it was necessary that many copies of the Law should exist, for reference in different localities. The Scribes transcribed the Law with accuracy, they gave the meaning of the original Hebrew, they interpreted for the devout congregations its significance. They were

as necessary to every law-abiding country as is a Supreme Court.

The Scribes listened to the bold teachings of Jesus with varying degrees of attention. Some of them had for him that contempt which so often characterises the attitude of a professor of theology toward a popular evangelist; some of them regarded him as a dangerous radical, whose teachings were subversive of law and order; some of them were green with jealousy. But there were a few who had learning and wisdom without pedantry; they recognised the power of the new teacher, and the magnetic force of his personality. It was one of this minority who asked Jesus a supremely important question, and received a supremely important answer. When the scribe asked him which is the first commandment, he might have believed that Jesus would select one of the ten, in which case the Master would have to defend his reply, and prove that it was greater than the others. But Jesus answered from another part of the Jewish law, and in such a decivise manner that even the learned scribe was convinced. This dialogue occurs in the twelfth chapter of Mark.

As it contains the central thought in the new religion, and supplies, not petty rules of observance and behaviour, but the single motive power that should direct both speech and action, it is necessary to quote it here:

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God: and there is none other but he:

And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.

It is pleasant to observe that Jesus, who had made disciples of fishermen and peasants, in this instance won to him the learned and scholarly professor of the law, a member of the most highly cultivated class in Palestine. And it is pleasant to record the friendship between the son of the carpenter and the wise lawyer. Each admired the other for the same reason. The scribe perceived that Jesus had answered them well: Jesus saw that the scribe answered discreetly. Amid the scoffers and scorners, these two great souls recognised their fundamental and eternal kinship.

Note that when Jesus proclaimed the eleventh and twelfth commandments, he was not inventing: *He was quoting from the Mosaic Law.* The eleventh is found in Deuteronomy, VI; 4, 5: the twelfth in Leviticus, XIX, 18. To my mind, it is a surer evidence of the power and wisdom of Jesus, that he selected these two passages, instead of originating them. Out of the entire body of the Law, with its moral ordinances and ceremonial prescriptions, his genius hit upon the two passages that contained the essence of religion.

What a magnificent surrender made by the scribe! Jesus answered him out of the Law, and the scribe did not hesitate to salute him by the title Master, meaning Teacher. Such an attitude from such a man in such a position is the highest tribute to both persons.

The Ten Commandments are a list of rules; the eleventh and twelfth are to become a part of the believer's personality. Is Love really higher than Law? Is it higher than duty? higher than honour? Let us see.

> I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more

is a fine saying, but he who says it must be sure that it is really honour, and not himself, that receives his major service.

In Browning's poem, *Which?* a priest is appointed umpire in a discussion among three ladies, to de-

cide who is the ideal lover. The first says she wants a respectable man, one who loves God first, his country second, his wife third. He must be both devout and a good citizen. The second insists on a little more. Her man must not only be respectable, he must have done something, he must have a record, show achievements. The third says that her man must love her most—more than God, his country, or even his own honour. Any gentleman would sacrifice his life for a lady; but my lover if necessary must be willing to sully his good name, if it should conflict with his devotion to me. And the priest declares that the third is the one of whom God would approve.

Remember that the question deals with love. Now the third man, whatever his faults, is a lover: he loves the woman more than anything else in the world; more than his life or his honour. We cannot tell whether the other two were whole-hearted lovers or not. It is just possible that their standards of self-respect made them regard their own interests more than the woman they professed to love. When a man says, "My self-respect will not allow me to do this or that," he may be in danger of losing his soul through self-worship. He may confuse his self-respect with his reputation. But the third man has no taint of selfishness: his thoughts are centred on the object of his love. Is there a love at once so great and so noble that it can triumph over honour?

Well, consider a country in time of war. Who really makes the supreme sacrifice? We do well to respect and reverence those who gave their lives that we may live in peace and security, and that the country might not suffer defeat. Yet splendid as such a sacrifice is, it is characteristic of all kinds of men in every nation in the world. The average man will give his life for his country. To whom do we pay the highest tribute? We bestow this on the man who sacrifices his *honour* for his country, who perjures himself, who swears false allegiance, who openly professes to hate the country he loves, whose life is a daily lie, who sacrifices what is most dear to noble minds, truth and honesty; sacrifices them because he believes such self-abasement is necessary for his country's welfare. I refer of course to the greatest of all heroes—the Spy.

In Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House,* a wife commits forgery to save her husband's life. When the truth comes out and he is threatened with disgrace, he curses her. She replies that she did it to save his life, and that she thought he would love her so for such a sacrifice that he would take the blame on himself. He, absorbed wholly in the consequences to his reputation, says that he would work for her, die for her: "but you can't expect a man to sacrifice his honour for a woman." She answers: "Millions of women have done it." So they have, God have mercy on their passionate, uncalculating hearts!

In Maeterlinck's play, *Sister Beatrice,* which, be

it remembered, deals with a mediaeval legend, a nun leaves her convent at the call of love. She returns broken by poverty and disgrace, but in her absence her place among the sisters has been taken by the Holy Blessed Virgin.

These three instances from three great writers are paradoxes. The word paradox comes from two Greek words which mean "beyond belief." A paradox is not the literal truth, but contains a hidden truth that needs emphasis. Truth is dark and must be seen if at all through a magnifying glass. Paradoxes are to be taken not in the letter, but in the spirit of their meaning. I am a professional teacher, and I know that if the teacher wishes his pupils to grasp an important idea, the idea must receive emphasis.

Socrates, Carlyle, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Maeterlinck, Browning, Shaw, Chesterton adopted the method of teaching by paradox. The greatest Teacher in history used that method almost exclusively. No wonder his disciples were amazed: which does not mean that they were astounded, but that they were confused, they were *in a maze*. Paradoxes ripen with time. What was puzzling to them is clearer to us. Hamlet says, "This was some time a paradox, but now the time gives it proof." The teachings of Jesus were spoken in a concrete and paradoxical form, because the truth they contained required tremendous over-emphasis, in order that it might finally

sink into human hearts. It is to be taken in its spiritual significance, not in the letter.

A short time ago I was talking with a man who said that he had never seen a Christian in his life. I told him I was sorry for his lack of experience, because I was fortunate enough to be acquainted with many excellent Christians. He replied, "Oh, I know plenty of church-members; but I never saw a man actually turn his left cheek, when smitten on the right." I reminded him if that was his definition of Christianity, he must be prepared to follow it out in all details. Jesus said, "whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." According to my friend's interpretation, you must go with him exactly two miles, for that is what Jesus commanded. If you should go two miles and a quarter, or one mile and nine-tenths, you could not possibly be a Christian. If you said a word except Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay, you could never be a Christian.

Christianity consists in a revolution of the spirit from selfishness to unselfishness. If a drunken ruffian struck you on the right cheek, you are not required to offer him an opportunity for his prowess on the left. The thing to do is to harbour no resentment, no, not even for a blow. Do not be vindictive. It might be necessary to overcome the ruffian by superior strength, but there must be no poison of malice, hatred or vengeance in the heart of a follower of Christ. Jesus used a supreme instance in order to emphasise what most needed em-

phasising, the spirit of love. The natural impulse of humanity is to return evil for evil. Well, this natural impulse, like most natural impulses, is wrong; it must be overcome by the substitution of the spirit of love and sympathy.

Two of the greatest words in the dictionary are Law and Duty. It was by putting those words first that the Romans became the foremost nation in antiquity, and the English built up the biggest empire in modern times. But fine as those words are, there is a finer—Love. This will eventually—many centuries hence—stop murderous rivalry between nations, because it will destroy the cause of it. It will make all nations brothers.

This idea was brought into the world by Jesus Christ, and it is the central, compelling motive power of his religion. When Love is the mainspring of thought, life and conduct, the moral law will not be broken. Paul knew that if he observed merely the rules of conduct and good citizenship, even to the giving of his goods to feed the poor, and did not have sincere love in his heart, he would be no better than sounding brass.

We cannot emphasise too strongly that the religion of Jesus Christ is a positive, not a negative, religion. It consists not in abstaining, but in doing.

Why is it that to so many normal, healthy young men and women Virtue seems unattractive? When we say that a certain young man is a very good young man, why do most people think he must be

uninteresting? It is because the word is misunderstood by being falsely presented. Virtue is truly never negative; but false teaching of religion and morality have had such currency that the normal person regards a very good young man or woman as a cipher. Furthermore, older people who preach virtue and religion are often extremely bad advertisements of both. The first effect of the Christian religion on the individual should be to improve his manners; to make him kindly, sympathetic, considerate, generous, and above all, cheerful. Shrewd Samuel Butler said that the chief duty of a Christian was to be happy. If Christian people are stern, sour, forbidding, if they depress every company they enter, we may be sure they are counterfeit; they have not got the real thing. The inner light of the gospel should illuminate their whole nature; if they are repellant and over-critical, they are traitors. Too many church members are like Dicken's Scrooge before Christmas; whereas Dickens meant by showing the absolute change in his disposition to indicate exactly what the true spirit of the Gospel can do for the hardest and most selfish heart. In a play by Strindberg, the Nurse, who is a Baptist, tries to convert the Captain, who is an atheist. She talks to him about the love of God. He replies, "It's a strange thing that you no sooner speak of God and love than your voice becomes hard, and your eyes fill with hate." He did not know

what she had, but whatever it was, he did not want it. He was right.

False ideas of goodness and religion have permeated not only conduct on earth, but conceptions of heaven. In a book by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, there is a little girl who was told that she must be good, and that if she were good she would go to Heaven. She enquired that if in Heaven she were perfectly good all the week, could she perhaps go to Hell Saturday afternoons and play a while? Was it Voltaire who said all the interesting people were in Hell?

Jesus taught the true meaning of virtue not only in the Sermon on the Mount, but in those incomparable short stories called the parables. I read an author a few years ago who affected to despise Luke. Let us remember that we owe solely to Luke the parable of the prodigal son, and if he had written nothing else, he would in that have outclassed all modern literature. I believe this parable has been misunderstood.

Many think it is a story of a man who had two sons, one good and one bad. In reality it is the story of a man who had two sons who were both bad, a sufficiently common experience. Of the two, the younger turned out to be more virtuous than the elder. Many seem to think that the younger son alone got his share of the property. Quite otherwise: "And he divided unto them his living." Trust the older to be present when property was divided!

The younger, being a creature of impulse, set out not to seek his fortune, but to spend it. It did not take him long. He was a low-lived, dissipated, sensual hound, and his friends departed simultaneously with his money. They were no good either; but they are not to be wholly blamed; such a fool as he could not have been an interesting companion. All that made him tolerable was his cash, and when that disappeared, he had little attraction left. He was as selfish as he was sensual; for he would not have gone home had not his money given out. He went home as many do only when hungry. Still, there is this fact to be remembered. The pangs of hunger sharpened both his memory and his wits. He came to himself, that is, he saw himself and his surroundings in their true proportions. He realised his degradation and his folly. Instead of swaggering home, he decided to tell his father that he had sinned and he knew it; that he had fairly received his share of the property and had thrown it away; that he had not the slightest right to demand any favours. But if his father could only hire him as a servant, so that he could work on the old place, he would be content.

Having made up his mind to go home, he went. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him." He did not meet his father; his father met him. It was by no accident that this interview took place. The father knew well enough that some day the boy would return, and who can tell how

many days and nights he had gone out to look for him? The father illustrates of course the active, searching, inquisitive, conquering love of God. We do not need to seek God; He is forever seeking us. The overwhelming delight of the father at the long-expected apparition of his returning son had in it no room for resentment or even reproof; it was as though the boy had come back from the grave. The young man tried to stammer out his confessions, his repentance, his unworthiness, his wish to be treated as a servant; but the father was not interested. His heart had room for only one thought—my son was dead and is alive again! He was lost and is found. And they began to be merry.

Often in church the Scripture lesson here comes to an end. But so far from this being the conclusion of the story, the most important part follows. The elder son was in the field, probably hard at work. But observing something unusual going on at the house, he, too, drew near, perhaps only out of curiosity. He did not take the trouble to enter himself, but called one of the servants and demanded an explanation of the dance music that saluted his ears. The servant, in an ironical tone, taking sides with the oldest son against the whimsical old man, told him what had happened. His respectability was shocked. He was wild with rage. "Therefore came his father out and intreated him." Always the father seeking the son, whether the son went astray through sensuality or through pride. Always the father seeking.

The irate young legalist called attention to his own spotless life. "I never broke any of your commandments; I never did anything wrong. Yet you never got up a feast for me that I might make merry with my friends." Do you suppose he had any?

The reply of the father would have broken a heart of stone; but as Victor Hugo would say, the elder brother did not have a heart of stone; he had a heart of wood. "Son, thou art ever with me." I can always rely on you. It is not necessary to celebrate your return to sanity; you are always sane. All that I have is thine. Not an extra kid, not a single fatted calf, not a special feast; all I have and every day belong to you. But don't you understand? Your brother was lost and is found. My son and your brother! No, he did not understand, and he could not.

If the father had not been so flooded with joy, he might have asked his oldest son some embarrassing questions. In return for the question, What have I ever done that was wrong? he might have asked him, What have you ever done that is good? You have indeed abstained from wandering and from bodily vices, but what have you done that is positively good? Whom have you helped?

There is hope for the younger son. He will never go wild again; he will never break his father's heart. He has learned the difference between love at home and love from strangers. But there is literally no hope for that case-hardened, respectable, self-right-

eous formalist. The arrows of love cannot pierce his impenetrable armour. Of the two sons, both bad, the younger is really the more virtuous. If there is in truth such a thing as the Unpardonable Sin, it is perhaps the sin of refusing affection toward a member of one's own family. For if you love not your brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen?

Suppose the father had greeted the younger son's return with a cold negative. No, you had your chance; you asked for your share of the property and you got it, didn't you? You went away, and now that your money is gone, you want to come home. Well, you can't. Never darken my doors again.

There are some strange-minded religionists to whom such treatment would seem equitable. But I say that if the father had received his son in that manner, he would have been more sinful than either of his children.

It is a pity that this should be called the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The word prodigal occurs nowhere in the Bible. This is a story that illustrates with perfect art and beauty the central truth of the Christian religion—Love.

For this is exactly where the Christian religion is most needed. It applies its attack at the strategic point of the forces of hell. If any one should think that I mean that Christianity looks lightly on vice, I answer that the standards of Christianity are higher than the standards of respectability. Except

your righteousness *exceed* the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

When a man says that he does not need churches or ministers or religion or Christ, because he knows how to live decently without them, he shows an interesting incapacity to understand the meaning of Christianity. If a man says, "I pay my debts, I deal honestly with all, I take good care of my wife and family, I return favours," let it be emphasised that Christianity assumes those things. Religion begins where respectability leaves off. Religion demands all that and more, much more.

I once heard a person characterised as a very good young man, and upon my enquiry for more specific details, the answer was, He does not smoke, he does not drink, he does not dance, he does not play cards. I insisted that so far nothing good had been said about him. I don't care to know what he does *not* do. What has he done? Is he a blessing to all who know him?

Love supplants duty because it gives a new and more fruitful motive. When the rich young man came to Jesus he asked a question amusingly characteristic. What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? You see he had everything in this life, and wanted the next also. Jesus told him to keep the commandments, and he asked, Which? Certain ones were specified, and the young man said, "But I have always observed them." Of course he had; that is why he was so rich. Every-

one knows that to live righteously and soberly is the surest way to save money. Then Jesus told him that if he sought perfection he should go and sell all his property and give it to the poor, and he added, *Come and follow me.*

What an opportunity! He offered to the young man his intimate friendship and daily society. Jesus was the most interesting person that ever lived, more interesting than Shakespeare or Goethe or Dickens or Napoleon. To have such a chance—to walk with him day by day, to hear his comments on the flowers of the field and on the men and women in the villages, to be his chosen companion! I had rather hear him talk than any man alive or dead.

It was the criminal Oscar Wilde, writing in prison, who pointed out the true significance of the suggestion of Jesus. When he told the young man to sell his property and give it to the poor, he was not thinking of the necessities of the poor; he was thinking of the young man, of his soul. Ordinarily it would be much better to administer wealth wisely than to give it all away; but here was a case where a man loved his property so much that it got between him and God. His soul was in terrible danger and a major operation was imperative.

The young man went away sorrowful: "for he had great possessions." In his old age, for such a man is sure to live long, he must often have remembered this conversation with the Teacher.

The young man had always done his duty but he did not know the meaning of Love. In Ibsen's play, *The Master-Builder,* there is a woman, Mrs. Solness, who has exactly that kind of piety most offensive to the normal man. She belongs to a class of women still too common; if you meet one of them at nine o'clock in the morning your whole day is spoiled. Young Hilda, fresh and vivacious, comes down stairs and asks Mrs. Solness if she will go out and walk with her. Mrs. Solness looks at the radiant girl with a chilling glance and says, "Yes, Hilda, I will walk with you, because it is my duty to do so." "Oh, pshaw," cried Hilda, "I don't want you to go with me because it is your duty to do so; I want you to go because you want to go, because you like to be with me."

Suppose you visited a sick friend, and the sufferer said, "It is very kind of you to call," and you answered, "I came because it is my duty to visit the sick." His temperature would rise; you might kill him.

In love there is no place for calculation and measurement. Peter asked, "How many times shall I forgive my brother? Seven?" He thought there ought to be a limit. But Jesus answered, "Seventy times seven." Any number. Don't figure it out: don't calculate. When Hamlet asked Polonius to take good care of the players, the old man responded, "I will use them according to their desert." The prince impatiently said, "God's bodikins, man,

much better: Use them after your own honour and dignity. The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty."

How much happier people would be in going to church, if instead of going reluctantly from a sense of duty or from the comic motive of setting an example, they went because they really wanted to go, were glad to share in the prayers and songs, glad to listen to the sermon! The difference in motive would yield a difference in profit.

True love is inexhaustible; it survives all injury and insult. It can no more be drained than you can drain the ocean with an eye-dropper. In Barrie's play, *What Every Woman Knows,* Maggie says, speaking of her truant husband to her brother, "I'll save him, David, if I can." David naturally asks, "Does he deserve to be saved, after the way he has treated you?" Maggie looks at him—"You stupid David." What did he know of love? He was not vindictive: he was stupid.

A poem by Richepin that Yvette Guilbert used to sing illustrates the true doctrine of love. A young man, the sole support of his widowed mother, and her constant companion, fell into the clutches of an evil woman, and lost his health, his position, his good name. Finally she said to him that he must give a supreme proof of his devotion by killing his mother and bringing to his mistress the bleeding heart. He did this, and in his eagerness to return, he slipped on the pavement and fell. The heart

rolled out of his hand. The heart spoke, and said, *Did you hurt yourself, my dear son?*

The principle of love not only helps us to help others, it is the surest preservative. It keeps the heart fresh. What is more ugly than the face of a sour old woman? But love keeps the heart young and gives fragrance and radiance to age. A life filled with love will never be wholly unhappy. It keeps the mind from utter desolation. The commands of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are meant more for the welfare of the follower than for the objects of his attention. When Jesus said, Love your enemies, he was not thinking of our enemies. He was thinking of *our* necessities; he was showing us the right way, the healthy way. Many have wondered at this ordinance, "Love my *enemies?* Why, it is difficult often to love my friends. They are very trying."

If you should go to an enemy and say piously, "I love you," you would only infuriate him. It is not for the sake of our enemies, but for our own spiritual health and peace of mind that we should love them. In matters that concern the body, we do all we can to get rid of poison and infection; but in affairs of the spirit, we hug to ourselves the poison of hatred, malice, and revenge, which eventually will destroy us and will in any case rob us of peace and cheerfulness. The moment we can substitute affection for hatred, that moment the poison

departs. We are healthy and free. It is pure wisdom to harbour no resentment.

Christianity shifts emphasis. I have heard even church-members say that you are a fool if anyone cheats you. That may be true; but the bigger fool is always the one who cheats. I dislike to see any crook praised for shrewdness, when he is really a fool. It is unpleasant to be cheated, but we can better afford to be cheated than to cheat. It is unpleasant to be robbed, but it is better to be robbed than to rob some one else. I have no desire to be killed, but I had rather be killed than to go out and kill some one. There are some things we cannot afford to do. We cannot afford to pay for anything by losing peace of mind.

Love is not a sickly, mushy, sentimental emotion; it takes a strong nature to love ardently and constantly. If love is a state of mind, an active principle of conduct, from which our speech and actions flow, then the religion of Jesus Christ appeals most of all to the wisest and strongest and most great-hearted men and women.

Unaffected and unpretentious love is irresistible. Jesus was followed everywhere by crowds. They could not see enough of him, hear his voice sufficiently often. The common people heard him gladly. I remember Henry Drummond telling this story. A group of young men, Christian missionaries, decided to go into a non-Christian country, live together in a house in a certain town, and each en-

gage in a separate business. They decided they would never speak of their religion either in public or in conversation. They would simply try, so far as was possible, to live and conduct business on Christian principles. At the end of a year, their house was filled every evening by natives who came to enquire what it was they were trying to do, on what idea their lives were founded.

And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.

VII

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN ORGANISATION

The Acts of the Apostles—Absolute Confidence of the Disciples and the Reason—One Man to Another —The Eleven—The Election of a Substitute for Judas—Fifty Days After Easter—The Rushing Wind —The First Christian Sermon—Community Feeling— Healing of Disease—The Cripple—Intervention of the Law—Peter Before the Council—No Denial This Time—The State and God—Barnabas the Evangelist—Ananias and Sapphira—Popularity of the Apostles—Peter's Shadow—Wise Counsel from Gamaliel —Suppression of Free Speech—The Sublime Courage of Man—Finance in the Early Church—A Wise Solution—Preaching and Begging—The Character of Stephen—Sedition Against Moses—Last Oration by Stephen—His Glorious Vision—The Patriotic Mob— Death of Stephen and Appearance of Saul.

VII

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN ORGANISATION

The book called The Acts of the Apostles is a historical work, made up of narrative, reports of speeches, letters, and diaries of travel. Its general tone is one of triumphant happiness and joyful assurance. The doubts, despondencies, defalcations, and despair of the disciples so frequently mentioned in the gospels are here conspicuously absent. Peter and the others have lost their fears and their perplexities; they speak with a confidence which opposition and persecution merely increased. The Peter who betrayed Christ, the Peter whom Jesus so often tested because of his doubts and jealousies, is in the Book of Acts a confident and convinced disciple, speaking out of some inner security of mind. He who had misbehaved in the living presence of his captain, showed unshaken valour after his captain's departure.

What was the cause of this revolution of the spirit? Why were the few members of the earliest Christian organisations so toweringly certain of their faith? The answer can only be their own

knowledge of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It must never be forgotten, that although Jesus had repeatedly told his disciples that he would die and rise again from the dead, they never understood what he said. His early death was as incomprehensible to them as his conquest of the grave. In the earliest Gospel, in the ninth chapter of Mark, there were two verses, the ninth and the thirty-second, that sufficiently prove their blind perplexity.

> And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.
>
> And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean. . . .
>
> For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.
>
> But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Luke begins the Book of Acts, as he began his gospel, with a dedication to Theophilus, reminding him of the former work in which he had given the life and teachings of Jesus; he immediately mentions the Resurrection, which has "many infallible proofs," and was indeed the central fact on which the early church was founded. As the Gospels cover about thirty-two years, from the birth to the resurrection of Christ, so the Acts cover the same length of time, from the Resurrection to an account of Paul's preaching in Rome. We see the new So-

ciety growing and expanding, from its origin in Judaea to its establishment in Rome. There are only a few heroes, and with the exception of Peter, they were new men, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, and last, but by no means least, Paul. Peter disappears from the story in the fifteenth chapter, and from that time on the dominating character is Paul. Even in the earlier portions, it is clear that Peter must decrease, and Paul must increase.

Nothing could more impressively illustrate the fact that the Christian religion, which eventually will conquer the whole earth, began in a purely individual manner in the relations of one man to another, than to remember that the whole book of the Acts was written by Luke for one person, Theophilus. It is a magnificent composition; the narrative passages are told with great spirit, the speeches are reported with the highest rhetorical skill, and the entire work has an indescribable gusto.

In the interval between the resurrection of Jesus and his disappearance he commanded the little group of disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they should unmistakably feel the consecration of the Holy Spirit. Even then they misunderstood him, and thought the triumph of the kingdom was at hand, for they asked, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel? But he told them knowledge of the future was reserved only for God. His words conveyed a mild reproof: Do not look for the harvest before you have planted any-

thing. Thus once more was exhibited that cardinal characteristic of Jesus, the practical wisdom that belongs only to those who have patience.

However he made a promise that history has abundantly proved true, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." These were his last words, for he vanished in a cloud. It is interesting to observe that while they were left gazing in wonder, with wild and whirling thoughts, two men stood by them in white apparel. It is interesting because whilst Matthew and Mark report that at the empty tomb one angel appeared to the women, Luke says, "two men stood by them in shining garments." Did Luke believe that these two who now comforted the lonely disciples with the prediction of Christ's return were the same who spoke to the women at the tomb?

This apparition occurred at the mount called Olivet outside of the town; and immediately the group returned to the city and went into an upper room, which the eleven used as a regular meeting place. It is pleasant to note that the mother of Jesus met with them. At this time the whole organisation numbered about one hundred and twenty. Peter, who gave a somewhat different version of the death of Judas from that recorded in Matthew, announced that it was fitting that the traitor's place in the twelve should be filled. There were two candidates, Justus and Matthias, and after a prayer for divine

supervision, the choice was made by the casting of lots, by which it appeared that Matthias was chosen, and became the twelfth man. Twelve was the sacred number, undoubtedly corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel; therefore it was necessary to have the little group intact. In view of the importance of this election, it has always seemed strange to me that neither Justus nor Matthias was ever mentioned again.

Fifty days after Easter, or the seventh Sunday, on the day of Pentecost, an old Jewish festival, now often called Whitsunday, came the new inspiration. Early on this Sunday morning, the disciples were gathered together to pray, when something that seemed to them like the rushing of a mighty wind filled the house and their hearts at the same moment. It is not exactly clear what happened; but the apostles were seized with a divine madness, and shouted in various languages. The noise came through the windows into the street, and drew a crowd, who were amazed to hear in the general chorus words in their several languages. This seemed inexplicable; for the speakers were all Galileans, who could use only three languages, Aramaic, Latin, and Greek; yet there were strange cries in strange tongues. It is not at all surprising that along the curious throng there were some who laughed and thought the disciples were drunk.

Peter, the natural spokesman, hearing this taunt, came out and addressed the crowd, thus delivering

"the first Christian sermon." He began by saying that the supposition of drunkenness was mistaken, as it was only between eight and nine o'clock in the morning. Knowing that the majority of his listeners were devout Jews and familiar with the Scriptures, he brought Judaism and Christianity together —they have since never been wholly separated. He called their attention to the old Hebrew prophets, and just as Jesus had said in his first sermon at Nazareth, *Today is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears,* Peter insisted that Jesus, who had been slain like a criminal, was the Messiah proclaimed repeatedly in their own sacred books. The fiery eloquence of Peter inflamed his audience, and many made the same request that an audience had made to John the Baptist, What shall we do?

They were told to repent, to believe in the Saviour, and to show their new profession by submitting to the rite of baptism; and on that day about three thousand were added to the society of Christians. In their enthusiasm, they held all property in common, and acted exactly like members of one family. Every day new members came in, and there happened what we should now call a revival.

In times of great excitement, the instinct of private property is often overcome by community sentiment. After the fire in San Francisco in 1906, strangers ate together as a matter of course, men accompanied others who were more fortunate with-

out asking any questions, and this continued for some weeks, until, as a friend informed me, "human nature once more asserted itself."

That the frequent religious conversions after Peter's sermon were accompanied by many cures of the sick, is sufficiently natural. Healing of the body from the very beginning of the ministry of Jesus even until now, has often followed healing of the mind. If many cannot believe in New Testament healing, how are they going to explain the cases in 1924?

But there was one, particularly dramatic, that excited universal attention. About four o'clock in the afternoon, Peter and John went into the temple to pray. As beggars and cripples even now collect around the doors of European churches, so at one gate of the temple, which was called Beautiful, there lay daily a cripple asking alms. He made his customary petition to the two worshippers, who, to his surprise, asked him to *look at them*. His disappointment when Peter said he had no money quickly changed to rapture when Peter, in the name of Jesus, commanded him to rise and walk. He not only walked, but leaped, rejoicing in his new powers; and he accompanied his two deliverers into the temple. He had been such a well-known cripple that his face was instantly recognised by a constantly increasing crowd, who were filled with wonder and amazement.

Peter naturally took advantage of the opportu-

nity, reminding his curious listeners of their sins in having slain One who had been foreseen by the prophets of old; he had triumphed over the grave and it was in his name that this cure had been accomplished. As they were the children of the prophets, and shared in that holy heritage, so they were also heirs of salvation in Jesus Christ, if they would come forward and claim it. Then something happened which was bound to happen sooner or later. It was certain that the excitement caused by the preaching and the new converts would attract the attention of the civic authorities.

The priests, the captain of the temple, and certain of the Sadducees came forward, seized Peter and John, and as by this time it was dusk, they put them in prison for the night. They were too late, however, to prevent the success of the sermon; for thousands accepted the new faith. Of all Jewish priests, the Sadducees were the most worldly and most conservative; the Captain of the Temple ranked next to the High Priest; he was himself a priest, and it was his duty "to preserve order in the Temple and its neighbourhood." Peter and John, by raising a tumultuous and noisy crowd, had therefore fallen under the jurisdiction of the appointed guardians of the holy place, and were legally arrested and confined.

Next day a formal meeting of the council was held, presided over by that same powerful pair who condemned Jesus, Annas, and his son-in-law

Caiphas, together with others, a formal and formidable assemblage. It was intolerable to them that Jesus should be more potent dead than alive, and if he were believed to be coming back, there was no limit to what might be a popular insurrection. Peter and John were arraigned. This time Peter did not deny Christ; on the contrary he affirmed that the cure of the lame man, which had made the disturbance, was done in the name of Jesus Christ, whom these very judges had crucified. "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner," quoting from the familiar book of Psalms. It was a strange spectacle to the learned judges to see two ignorant fishermen, accompanied by the healed cripple, standing before them and speaking with such certitude. They were told to wait without, while after a hurried conference, they were again summoned and forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus, which command Peter and John refused to obey. It is a striking proof of the large number of converts that the priests did not dare to punish the apostles for their temerity and defiance; they unwillingly but definitely set them free.

The answer of Peter and John to the governing authorities brings up a question that can trouble only men who are sincerely religious; if there is an apparent conflict, shall we obey the state or shall we obey God?

Where did Peter and John, who were ignorant

fishermen, become so familiar with the Old Testament? Was it the result of teaching in the home, of hearing it on Sabbaths in the synagogue, or of their association with Jesus? Be this as it may, there have always been plenty of men and women, technically uneducated, who have had a good working knowledge of the Bible, and can quote from it to the discomfiture of the professionally cultivated.

As soon as the two apostles were released, they "went to their own company," and reported the judicial proceedings. All united in prayer, and were assured by their emotions that their prayers were heard. The community spirit was strengthened; the rich took care of the poor, and the apostles were appointed distributors of wealth, so that none should suffer.

Among these we now first hear of a man whom the apostles called Barnabas, who was subsequently to become a powerful evangelist. He sold some land, and brought the money to Peter and his associates.

As there was a traitor in the original twelve, so there were a pair of traitors among the new converts, who thought more of their money than of their religion. They were to become infamous for all time as representative liars, though compared with the proficiency of some modern church-members, their efforts seem crude. I have always been sorry for this husband and wife, because their punishment was so terrible; but I suppose it was necessary to

set an example at the beginning of the young organisation. Ananias and Sapphira were deliberate liars, because they had talked it all over together, and decided to give to Peter only a part of the money they had received from a sale, and keep a portion for future emergencies. Peter, who could by a word restore the dead to life, had also the opposite power; and Ananias, who had deposited the money without a word, fell dead in the same silence. Three hours later came Sapphira, who was ignorant of what had occurred, but played up to the part she had agreed upon with her unfortunate husband. Unlike Ananias, she was given an opportunity to speak; and she unhesitatingly gave utterance to what Theodore Roosevelt used to call a deliberate and unqualified falsehood. It was her last word; she dropped dead on the spot, was carried out, and in a way neither had foreseen, she was forced to lie perpetually with her husband.

This incident, which reminds us more of the Old Testament than of the new, made a tremendous impression, not only upon the spectators, but upon all who heard the tale; and it was talked about for a long while. The narrative says, "great fear came upon all the *church*." This is the first time Luke uses that word to describe the Christian society, the expression in the last verse of the second chapter of Acts not being correctly translated by that name.

The news of the Christian movement quickly spread outside the city; multitudes came from all

quarters to see the Apostles, bringing the sick even into the streets, in the hope that Peter's shadow might fall across them. This constantly increasing popularity was too much for the High Priests, and despite their fear of the people, and their former action in dismissing Peter and John with only a reprimand, they laid hands on the apostles, and haled them to prison, from which they were delivered secretly in the night. When the court sat next morning, the prisoners were sent for, and their absence naturally caused considerable astonishment. As a child this incident highly pleased me, for I loved to see those crafty high priests checkmated. Peter and his associates, however, were not far to seek; in fact, they were openly preaching. Then the captain, accompanied by the police, arrested them in the midst of their oratory; but it was done more by entreaty than by brutality, for the police were in terror of the crowd. The apostles went willingly before the ecclesiastical court, and in reply to the remonstrances of the judges, once more repeated their doctrine of the higher patriotism—we ought to obey God rather than men. The priests then decided on the death penalty, but a learned Doctor of the Law, named Gamaliel, famous because of his more famous pupil, advised that the prisoners be set outside; he then rehearsed various accounts of insurrections that had proved futile. Gamaliel was one of the first of those enlightened men, of whom there are in every age too few, who

believe in the liberty of spoken opinion. If the speakers of sedition be in error, they will fail; if they possess the truth, they will triumph; and in any case, repression by violence is a silly and stupid way to deal with them. He succeeded in persuading his judicial colleagues to leave the apostles alone. They were then called back into the courtroom: "and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go." What does the word "beaten" imply? Were they merely buffeted about by the officers in the room, or were they formally punished with rods or scourged? At all events, on this occasion, physical suffering was added to the judicial warnings. This had exactly the effect that anyone acquainted with human nature might have foreseen. The apostles rejoiced that they had been counted worthy to suffer for the Name, and continued to preach Christianity in the Temple, in private houses, and in the streets, with renewed fervour. One of the sublimest traits in man is the fact, so often proved, that all attempts to repress opinion by violence increase not only the faith of the sufferers, but their zeal in spreading it.

In a trial for sedition, held in Scotland in the eighteenth century, one of the accused, Mr. Skirving, who stood in danger of the death sentence, was bullied by the presiding judge. The prisoner regarded his panoplied tormentor, and said stiffly, "It is altogether unavailing for your Lordship to

menace me, for I have long learned to fear not the face of man."

The early church, like all modern churches, was not without dissensions; and a quarrel arose in a rather curious way. Among the newly converted were Jews who spoke Greek, and Jews who spoke Aramaic, the two languages most commonly heard in Palestine; racial prejudice, which makes people of any nation think that all others are somehow inferior, caused trouble, and the Greek-speaking party felt that they were being discriminated against. In particular, they complained that their widows, who, being without bread-winners, were dependent on the daily distribution of rations, did not receive their equitable share. Then the twelve apostles called together the whole congregation, and said, with dignity, that it was not fitting that they should leave preaching the word of God to wait on tables, but that it would be well to have the commissary department managed by seven trusty men, while the twelve continued their spiritual teaching. "And the saying pleased the whole multitude." Seven were appointed, headed by Stephen—as their names were all Greek, they were particularly well-fitted to deal with this awkward situation. They were inducted into office with prayer, and were given their commissions by the apostles laying their hands upon them. The plan seems to have worked perfectly; the church grew steadily, and among the converts were actually a large number of Jewish priests.

In the disposition of this difficulty, which if neglected, might have made a rift in the church, we see not only the religious consecration of the twelve, but their common sense. How fortunate it would be if modern churches and colleges everywhere could follow this apostolic precedent! The twelve said rightly that it was unseemly for them to neglect the word of God for a supervision of the kitchen. In the same way, every small village and country church would prosper more abundantly if a committee of the members would take out of the hands of the pastor financial cares and worries, and leave him free for spiritual leadership and pastoral work. But the prevailing custom is for the minister to busy himself mainly with petty problems of finance, and every variety of business care; so that his time and energy cannot be given to the one thing for which the church exists. This is certainly a reason that the average of preaching is not higher.

Likewise, in the majority of colleges, the President has to give nine-tenths of his time to questions of raising and spending money, when he should devote the whole of it to problems of education and character. If every minister, before accepting a charge, and every President, before accepting office, could afford to dictate terms, and insist that he be left free to do the work for which he was fitted, a vast improvement might take place in organised religion and education.

The twelve apostles were not to be drawn from

their duties by any such mundane affairs. They settled the question then and now by saying firmly, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." They were as wise in their ideas as to the division of labour as they were zealous in the cause of their Master.

Stephen, who is mentioned only in the Book of Acts, was not only a wise, honest, and just man, as is proved by his having been chosen to head the Seven, but he was a particularly able speaker and debater; in addition there was in his personality something magnetic and winsome. No better man for proselyting could have been found; for the eloquence of his words was matched by the charm of his character. He was a glowing advertisement of the transforming power of the new religion.

As Peter and John had drawn the hostile attention of the Hebrew priests and their party, Stephen was attacked by the synagogue of the "Libertines," which refers to those who were free descendants of Jewish slaves. These, and other Greek-speaking Jews from Cyrene and Alexandria, although not so narrow in their doctrines as the Aramaic Jews, were nevertheless disturbed by the preaching of Stephen, which seemed to them dangerous and subversive. They put forward in opposition their best orators, whom Stephen met in joint debate; but these were not equal to the situation. Then the conservatives, having failed in fair means, resorted to treachery; for they were determined to destroy the

evangelist. As so often occurred in Bible history (and out of it) false witnesses were found, who informed against him, saying that he was a blasphemer. He was, characteristically enough, accused of trying to "change the customs" which Moses had delivered. It really amounted to sedition against the state, always and even unto this day, the unpardonable sin. Stephen was accordingly haled to the Council, where, instead of showing fear or embarrassment, his noble countenance glowed with the lamp of the Holy Spirit. "And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

Despite the cruelty and treachery of the court, Stephen was allowed to speak in his own defence, and was apparently not interrupted until he had delivered a speech that fills fifty-two verses of the seventh chapter of Acts. How did Luke obtain so complete a report of this address? Professor Wade has pointed out that there are expressions which do not recur anywhere in the New Testament; they must have been the very words of Stephen, and Luke may have got a detailed report of the trial and the speech from Paul.

With patriotic fervour, Stephen gave a digest of the national history, beginning with Abraham, mentioning Isaac, Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, the story of Joseph and his brethren, Moses and the Egyptians, Aaron and the calf, David and Solomon.

There were some differences in minor details from the Old Testament story, but nothing was more familiar to the judges and to the audience than this chronological recital. Why did he do it? Possibly for two reasons. First, to show that he, like them, knew his nation's history, and was proud of its authentic heroes; second, to show that just as in olden times the children of Israel had frequently departed from the faith, were rebellious, stiff-necked and perverse, had not only refused to harken to the voices of their prophets, but had actually slain them, so contemporary Jews were showing the same folly and wickedness. His speech, in so far as he had been accused of attacking Moses, was a spirited defence, for in it he glorified Moses, Abraham and the prophets; at the close of the rehearsal of his story, he suddenly turned against his accusers, and dramatically accused them of being the actual rebels against the divine law. They indeed followed tradition, but it was a criminal tradition. And with tremendous conviction, he pointed at the high priests, and made this terrible indictment:

> Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.
>
> Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:
>
> Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

His attack upon the custodians of the law as traitors naturally roused the whole court into a fury; the room was filled with snarls of rage.

Suddenly something happened which takes us back to the time when the prophet Micaiah stood before his enemy King Ahab, and had a vision of the Lord God Almighty sitting on the throne surrounded by all the hosts of heaven. In the midst of the murderous rage of his enemies, Stephen was far away; he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing in the holy light. In a transport of ecstasy, he cried "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man sitting on the right hand of God."

What visions of glory are beheld by men of genius and mystics, we who dwell only on the earth cannot even dimly imagine. We have their testimony which proves that they enjoy experiences beyond our range. When Händel wrote the Hallelujah Chorus in the Messiah, he said that he saw the heavens opened, and the Son of God sitting in glory; and the music is sufficient proof.

But the priests and their satellites were filled with uncontrollable rage; they waited for no formal condemnation, but resorted as mobs always have, to lynch law. They rushed upon the defenceless prisoner, hustled him out of the city, and, in accordance with Old Testament usage, stoned him to death. He was the first Christian martyr, and his last words were worthy of his Master. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

This irregular proceeding must have been reported to Pilate, for he was still in office. It was characteristic of his Roman indifference and callous temper that he took no official notice.

As the disciples of John the Baptist had taken away his body and given it formal burial, so members of the new church carried off the bruised remains of Stephen, and buried him, amid great lamentations.

The death of Stephen brings to our attention a new man, who was to be a mighty and influential leader of the faith for which Stephen died. In order that they might throw stones more freely, the mob took off their outer clothes and laid them at the feet of a youth named Saul, who regarded the scene with patriotic approval and who doubtless went home rejoicing in the accomplishment of a good deed and the removal of a dangerous fellow.

VIII

PETER AND PAUL

The Growth of Persecution and its Consequences—Visit of Philip to Samaria—The Laying on of Hands—Simon the Trickster—Christianity a World Religion—The Secretary of the Treasury—The Baptism—The Dramatic Conversion of Saul—Vision in Blindness—Saul's Powers as an Advocate—Peter and Dorcas—Cornelius and the Italian Band—Peter's Vision of Universal Democracy—The Release from Formalities—Snobbery in the Church—Abolition of Racial and Social Distinctions—The Spread of the Gospel—Antioch and the Name Christian—The Prophets—Practical Aid a Vital Part of Christianity—Death of James—Imprisonment of Peter—The Knocking in the Night—Horrible Death of Herod—Last Apperance of Peter—His Plea for Liberalism.

VIII

PETER AND PAUL

In the murder of Stephen, the pack had tasted blood; and the persecutions of Greek-speaking Christians raged with extreme violence. Saul, who was first on one side and then on the other, but always a leader, seems to have been the chief agent in carrying out the orders of the high priests. A systematic and well-organised attempt was made to destroy the church in Jerusalem. How Peter and John and the rest of the twelve escaped, when so many lesser men were caught, is impossible to say; perhaps, speaking Aramaic, they seemed closer to the traditions of Moses, or perhaps they were too popular because of their gifts of healing; at all events, they were either unmolested, or they successfully eluded the police. Saul put youthful energy into the work: "as for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."

History teaches us what happens when an attempt is made to suppress thought by violence. The Christians who were not caught by Saul and his gang were driven out of Jerusalem, and their persecutors prob-

ably felt relieved by their absence. But their dispersion over Judaea and Samaria merely widened their opportunities. Luke says rather quaintly, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." Shortly after, Philip himself went to Samaria, took up his quarters in the city of that name, and preached the Gospel. Partly on account of his eloquence, partly on account of his healing the sick and lame, he was received with great joy, and the new faith grew apace.

As in olden times the professional magicians of King Pharaoh in Egypt were forced to admire the superior skill of Moses and Aaron, so in Samaria there was a certain trickster, Simon by name, who, three parts conceit and one part cunning, had bewitched the citizens. He was at the height of his power and reputation when Philip appeared upon the scene. The success of the Christian evangelist was such that many men and women were baptized daily; and Simon, either feeling some strange power in the new religion, or, as is more probable, trimming his sail to catch the fresh breeze, announced himself as a convert, was baptized, and joined himself to Philip, studying with a professional eye the latter's powers of healing, and wondering from what source this strength came.

Meanwhile the twelve in Jerusalem heard the good news from Samaria; they sent thither Peter and John, who, finding that the army of converts had been properly baptized but gave no sign of

consecration, prayed for them and laid their hands upon them. "Then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost." What does this mean? Does this mean that the converts now gave evidence in their daily life of a moral and spiritual change, or does it mean that the reception of the Spirit was evidenced by peculiar ecstasies? At all events, the solemn laying on of hands carried the apostolic benediction and commission, and there must have been some immediate response from the recipients sufficiently noticeable. For Simon, closely observing the behaviour of those whom Peter and John had blessed, and thinking that it was a species of magic that could be taught by one who held the secret, and having found that money would accomplish most desires, made the error of offering Peter and John downright cash if they would impart to him their powers. Perhaps he knew he was a fraud, and thought they were. He was quickly undeceived. Peter greeted the bribe with unmitigated scorn, saying that the mere fact of his offering it showed him to be in extreme need of conversion. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter." You don't belong.

It is to the credit of Simon, that instead of becoming enraged, or slinking away in shame, he asked Peter to pray for him, that he might escape damnation. Whether he did this merely to curry favour (he seems to have been a cadging person) or whether this time he was really convicted of sin,

is uncertain. No further mention of him is made in the Bible; but the fact that Peter did not answer his request for prayers looks ominous for the sorcerer.

Curiously enough, there is a record in Justin that after this conversation with the apostle, Simon went to Rome, where he was worshipped as a God, had a statue put up to him, and was in later years met again by Peter. The story is improbable.

The success of the missionary work in Samaria not only widened the influence of the Gospel, but widened the intellectual horizon of the Apostles; their spiritual strength grew by using it. Christianity was to be a world religion, in which no particular nation was to have a preference. A special instance that follows next in the narrative shows how this breadth of view was to take in not only other peoples, but other individuals; a striking concrete example.

Philip felt a divine impulse to go southwest to the desert road running from Jerusalem to Gaza. There he met the Secretary of the Treasury under Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians. Even as in olden times the Queen of Sheba had come up from the South to do homage to Solomon at Jerusalem, so this powerful official of another queen of the south had come up to Jerusalem to worship. He was a Gentile who had embraced the Hebrew religion, and now, having completed his religious

duties in the Holy City, was returning southwards in his chariot. He was more or less familiar with the Old Testament in Greek, for the Septuagint version had been made in Egypt, and as he travelled, he was absorbed in the study of the fifty-third chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah. Sitting in his chariot he was reading the Greek text aloud, and the words being familiar to Philip, the apostle drew near. The chariot stopped. Philip asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" And he replied modestly, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" And he invited Philip to mount and sit beside him. The eunuch had been reading the seventh and eighth verses of the famous chapter, which speak of the sacrificial death of the Messiah. The phrase quoted in the account in Acts, "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away," means simply that he was humiliated by being refused justice. The eloquence and power of the old prophet made a deep impression on the mind of the African, but he naturally did not understand the particular application of the words. He therefore asked Philip if Isaiah were alluding to himself or to some other man. Philip seized the opportunity, and with the verses in Isaiah as a text, preached to him an expository sermon on Jesus. The eunuch was convinced; and as they came to a stream, he asked Philip if there were any reason why he should not be baptized there and then.

And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The chariot was stopped; and how amazed the retinue must have been to see the great man go down into the water with Philip! Probably no baptism has ever been watched with more intense curiosity.

The conversion of so important an official was naturally described in detail; but a far more influential man was soon to be added to the church. The surrender of Paul meant eventually the conquest of the world; he was to become the most powerful agent, advertiser, and example of the new faith. Burning with zeal against the Christians, Saul had obtained letters of authority from the high priest in Jerusalem, to arrest any men or women in Damascus (about one hundred and fifty miles north) and bring them back as prisoners for trial. As he drew near to the end of his journey, there suddenly shone a great light from heaven, like the light in the sky on the first Christmas; it was so bright that the traveller was blinded and fell to the earth; a great voice was heard, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? and upon asking in a new and strange humility as to the origin of the voice, he was told that it was the very Jesus whom he was persecuting. The pursuer now became the pursued. The searching love of God had disarmed him.

Nothing could possibly be more characteristic of Saul than his next question: Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do?* He was told to go into the city, and his duty would there be revealed to him.

There are three accounts of this supremely important event, Acts IX, XXII, XXVI. They naturally differ in details, but all agree on the sudden light and on its effect on Saul. It accords with human testimony that afterwards some of his companions thought they had seen a light, while others thought they had heard a voice.

It was only after Saul became blind that he saw the truth; for his darkness was lighted by the lamp of the Holy Spirit.

His companions led him by the hand into Damascus; for three days he saw, ate, and drank nothing. He was thinking. He was praying.

What's in a name? It is curious, in view of the common connotation, that in the city Saul stayed at the house of a man named Judas, and was told his duty by a man named Ananias.

Judas's house was in a street called Straight, which is today the main street of Damascus. Ananias could not believe the authenticity of the impulse which commanded him to seek out the chief enemy of the faith; but he was informed that Saul was to be the inspired channel through which Christianity was to reach both Gentiles and Jews. Ananias accordingly entered the house, placed his hands in what had now become the form of apostolic bene-

diction on the head of the blind man, and called him *Brother*. Saul instantly had a sensation as though scales had fallen from his eyes; he rose, was baptized, took food, and lived in terms of intimacy with the disciples.

It is always possible that if an enemy were treated like a brother, the mask of prejudice and hostility would disappear, and frank friendship take the place of hatred.

The conversion of Saul is the most dramatic, the best known, and the most influential in the entire history of the Christian church.

The zeal which Saul had displayed against the Christians was now exerted in their behalf; in the Jewish synagogues he began to preach *the divinity of Christ*. His audiences were astounded when they heard the chief advocate for the prosecution become the leading advocate for the other side. Some met him boldly in public debate; but Saul, whose natural powers in argument had been increased by inspiration, discomfited his antagonists, and made converts every day.

From this moment to his death his life was in danger. The Jews were not going to permit so effective a pleader to have his way. The gates of the city were watched that he might be caught unawares and murdered. But in the night his friends placed him in a basket, and let him down by the outside of the wall, whence he escaped to Jerusalem. There he attempted to join the disciples, but they

were naturally afraid of him, and suspected a traitorous design. Barnabas, either wiser or bolder than the others, received him gladly, and persuaded his colleagues that the recruit was sincere. In Jerusalem Saul publicly debated with the Greek Jews; their response was a plot against his life. Here again he was saved by his friends. They conveyed him secretly to Caesarea, and then sent him to the city of his birth, Tarsus.

In the conversations between Saul and the disciples in Jerusalem, he must have learned a great deal about the life and death of Jesus, and of his teaching.

After his escape to Tarsus, the new church enjoyed a period of rest; for some reason persecutions were abated. Throughout Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria the Christian communities grew rapidly, adding converts every day.

In the absence of Paul, Peter once more comes to the front. He visited the little community at Lydda, a town about midway between Joppa and Jerusalem, later to become known as the birthplace of St. George. Here he found a paralytic, Aeneas, who had not walked for eight years. When Peter told him he was healed by Jesus Christ, he immediately stood up. The excitement caused by this miracle was increased by a greater one; in Joppa, about ten miles distant, there dwelt a woman whose name in Aramaic was Tabitha and in Greek Dorcas, which means *gazelle*. She had been a shining light

in the new church, and was known in all the neighbourhood for the loveliness of her character and her deeds of charity. She died; and the disciples, hearing that Peter was in Lydda, sent for him. He came immediately and entered the funeral chamber, where he saw an all too familiar sight. The room was filled with poor widows who were sobbing, talking about Dorcas, and showing the garments she had made. Peter asked to be left alone with the dead woman. Then he prayed, and turning to the body called out confidently, *Tabitha, arise!* She opened her eyes and saw her deliverer; he took her by the hand, raised her up, and calling in the mourners, presented to them their faithful friend. The delight and wonder caused by this event brought many into the church; and Peter made a lengthy stay in Joppa, living with Simon the tanner.

This miracle is the only one of the kind reported in the early church, and may account partly for the rapid spread of the Gospel in that region.

Thirty miles north of Joppa there was another coast town, Caesarea. Here was a Roman garrison of soldiers, made up mainly of native recruits; but one company had come from Italy, and was called the Italian Band. Their centurion was Cornelius, a pious, just, and generous man. About three o'clock one afternoon he saw plainly (evidently) a messenger in a vision, who told him to send to Joppa, there to enquire at the house of Simon the tanner, by the seaside, for one Peter, and to obey

whatever command this man should give. Cornelius had learned obedience before he had received authority. He lost no time in sending two of his servants, accompanied by a trustworthy soldier, who was his orderly, and as they were approaching Joppa, about noon, Peter went on the housetop for prayer before luncheon. As the table was set, he fell into a trance, and had a vision of many kinds of beasts. He was ordered by a voice to slay and eat; but he replied that he could eat nothing unclean, to which objection he was told that things cleansed by God were not to be despised. The vision and the voice came thrice; and while Peter was wondering what it all meant, the three messengers from Cornelius reached the house, and called out at the gate, enquiring if Peter was staying there. Peter received a divine impulse to descend and join them. They informed him of their mission; he invited them in; they broke bread together, and spent the night. Next day Peter started with them for Caesarea, accompanied also by members of the church at Joppa. Cornelius was waiting for them with his friends and relatives, and the moment Peter appeared, the Centurion fell at his feet in worship. But Peter said frankly, Stand up; I myself also am a man. Peter was sure that Christ was divine and that he himself was not.

By this time the full meaning of the vision of strange beasts had become clear to the apostle; he knew that the old distinctions between Jew and

Gentile were annihilated by the Christian religion; all men were to be brothers; and in truth any notion of caste is fundamentally hostile to the teachings of Christ.

In the presence of what was now a large gathering of people, Cornelius asked Peter to tell him the divine truth.

The speech of Peter is immensely important in the history of the church. Many of the Jewish converts to Christianity had kept their former social distinctions, and could not believe that the Gospel was as directly addressed to Gentiles as to the chosen ones, nor could they believe in the brotherhood of man. Peter gave them some primary instruction both in religion and in democracy.

> God is no respecter of persons:
> But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

We can hardly realise, we who profess even if we do not practice democracy, how revolutionary was this idea. Peter explained the Gospel and the Saviour; and it was on this occasion that he gave that admirable description of Jesus, as one "who went about doing good."

The audience was inspired. Those who were circumcised were astonished to find those whom they regarded as less fortunate now equally filled with the Holy Spirit, and it is symptomatic of the workings of the Gospel to observe that it was the converted Jews who then and there suggested that

the Gentiles be received with them into the church. Water was found; all were baptized together, and racial and social distinctions were placed exactly where they belong, in the limbo of outworn, useless, and unproductive ideas.

Nothing is more shocking than snobbery in the church, because nothing is more at variance with the spirit of Christianity. I suppose it is inevitable that some particular churches, owing to their location in a fashionable part of a city, should contain a larger percentage of socially aristocratic members than others; the Gospel is for the rich as well as the poor, for they both need it. But for any members of a church to feel and act as if they were superior to other members is a serious and demoralising error; there is perhaps only one thing worse, and that is for the clergyman himself to be an ecclesiastical snob. The congregation and the public would be hideously shocked if a clergyman should appear drunk in the pulpit or in the course of his sermon indulge freely in profanity; but disgusting as such a spectacle would be, it would not shock me so much as to see any clergyman anywhere under any circumstances speak and act as if he felt himself to be socially superior. Social and racial distinctions are irreconcilable with Christian teaching. The matter was settled once for all by the revelation to Peter.

Jesus indeed simply emphasised and made supreme, when he taught the brotherhood of man, an

idea in the Old Testament. In the fifty-first Psalm, we read, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." A haughty heart and a conceited mind are more out of place in Christian communities than professional criminals.

Peter quickly discovered after his own enlightenment that the new doctrine of social equality would not be accepted without a struggle. When Peter returned from Caesarea to Jerusalem, the apostles and church members who were Jews remonstrated sharply with him, because he had sat down at meat with Gentiles. Peter rehearsed the whole story: his vision on the housetop at Joppa, his expedition to Cornelius, and the undiscriminating descent of the Holy Spirit. He concluded by a powerful appeal:

> Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

It is certainly to the credit of his Jerusalem hearers that they were convinced by this speech; they had nothing further to urge, but they all glorified God.

Luke's narrative in the book of Acts now goes back to what happened immediately after the murder of Stephen. The effect of that deed of violence was to scatter Christian fugitives in many directions. Some fled north up the Phoenician coast as far as Antioch, and some to the island of Cyprus. These were Greek-speaking Christians, who had all

been Jews, and at first they preached the Gospel only to members of their own race. Their efforts met with success; the church grew apace. Their influence widened; and in Antioch some of them began to do evangelistic work among Greek-speaking people who were not Jews; thus in many directions and to many classes of people Christian teaching went forth. What Peter had done in one town was now becoming general.

There must have been some regularly established system of messengers; for as the church in Jerusalem had learned of Peter's work in Caesarea, the news now came of the missionary efforts in Cyprus and Antioch. A meeting of the apostles and members was called, and Barnabas, who had already shown his faith by generosity in money and in opinion, was selected as envoy to Antioch. "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Barnabas was deeply impressed by what he saw in the northern city; and a brilliant idea occurred to him. He remembered that Paul had gone to his native town, Tarsus; he departed thither, and to the delight of the new converts, he brought Paul back with him to Antioch. This is the first occasion where Barnabas and Paul worked together. For a whole year this splendid pair remained in Antioch, bringing in recruits and strengthening the growing church.

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Apparently they were called Chris-

tians not by their friends, but by their enemies, or by citizens of the place who regarded them either with indifference or with amusement. They were always talking about Christ; hence the name *Christians,* meaning simply, "Christ's men." As so often happens, a name given partly in derision was adopted by the intended victims; it became an appellation of which they were proud, and of which we ought to be.

Professor Wade calls attention to the first known use of it by members of the church in I Peter IV:16. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

We are next informed of a group of persons in the church at Jerusalem whose gifts and duties seem rather obscure. These were "prophets." Were they prophets in the Old Testament sense, teachers of righteousness? Or did they possess some special power of clairvoyance? Or was the existence of such a class a relic of the superstition evident in so many individual and collective minds? Predictions of the next winter's weather and of the end of the world have always found many credulous believers. However this may be, some of the "prophets" in Jerusalem, attracted by the news from Antioch, journeyed thither. One of them named Agabus, announced the coming of a general famine; and there was one, but whether it corresponded to the prediction we cannot tell. The significant fact is the action taken by the Antioch

church; "every man, according to his ability," sent help to those in Judaea; and Barnabas and Paul, who had hitherto been carriers of the Good News, now carried southward substantial help to the sufferers. This was a practical illustration of the Christian spirit, which in the twentieth century has fortunately become general. In this respect Christianity has already nearly conquered the world. Today wherever there is pestilence, famine, flood, or fire, organisations in more prosperous communities send out help as a matter of course. Aid is sent not only to fellow-Christians and to fellow-countrymen, but to any part of the world needing it. The organisation of the Red Cross is as truly representative of the Cross of Christ as any missionary church. Examples of the catholicity of charity may be seen in the assistance sent by America to Russia in 1921 and 1922, and to Japan in 1923.

These illustrations of the true spirit of Christianity had their origin at Antioch, whence contributions flowed to the hungry people in Judaea.

The period of comparative peace and immunity from persecution that the early church had enjoyed after the conversion of Saul suddenly came to an end. King Herod, who received the royal title from the Roman Emperor, and was a brother of Herodias of evil memory, determined in the year 44 to take active measures against the Christians. He killed James, John's brother, the son of Zebedee. (It is strange that we hear so little of John

in the accounts of the church at Jerusalem.) Seeing that this murder was received by the orthodox Jews with high favour, he seized Peter, put him in prison under a strong guard of soldiers, intending to bring him forth later, for torture or death or both. Sixteen soldiers had charge of him, in groups of four; perhaps stationed at the four points of the compass. The night preceding his intended execution, as he was sleeping—his being sound asleep is an evidence of the peace of his mind—and bound in chains to two soldiers, he somehow escaped, and found himself in the city street. He said rather quaintly, that the Lord had delivered him "from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." In the middle of the night he came to the house of Mary, who was the mother of Mark the evangelist; nobody was asleep, for a company had gathered together there, and they were all awake and praying for Peter. Peter knocked boldly; a girl named Rhoda came to the door, and when she heard Peter's voice, she was so filled with surprise and delight that she ran back into the room to tell the others, leaving Peter outside, who continued knocking. Although they had been praying for Peter's deliverance, they had looked for nothing so spectacular as this, and they thought and said that Rhoda had lost her mind. Peter continued knocking. Finally they opened the door. Peter entered hurriedly, said that God had delivered them, told them to inform

James and the brethren, whereupon he escaped. Why, I wonder, did he especially mention James?

I have always thought that Luke wrote the next verse with a smile, with a touch of humorous satisfaction. "Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter."

There was soon an even greater stir, for the cruel king ordered that the sixteen military guards should be put to death.

This was fortunately one of the last of his arbitrary cruelties; he had exhausted the patience of God. He had been angry against the maritime cities of Tyre and Sidon, and by a blockade or some other means, had cut off their food supply. They sent a delegation to him, and, probably with a suitable bribe, having got the royal chamberlain on their side, they were granted an audience. Herod, in the kingly robes, mounted his throne, and "made an oration." The servile flatterers from the coast shouted that it was not the voice of a man, but of a god. Some horrible disease immediately became acute. His death was no doubt as much of a relief to the Phoenicians as to the Christian church. King Herod died: "but the word of God grew and multiplied." Barnabas and Saul, having completed the work of relief, returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, and this time they took with them Mark.

The attempted destruction of Peter by Herod is

almost the last event recorded in the New Testament of Peter's career. He makes his final appearance in the book of Acts in the fifteenth chapter, and in a happily characteristic manner. A question came up, during the evangelistic work of Paul and Barnabas, that was later to receive a great deal of attention from the former, and indeed to be settled for all time by his decision. This matter, which then seemed of the utmost importance, was whether circumcision was necessary to salvation. The dispute became so hot that finally it was decided to refer it to the home church at Jerusalem. Accordingly a committee was appointed, consisting of Paul, Barnabas, and a few others, and when they reached Jerusalem, a formal meeting was held, attended by the apostles, elders, and the chief men of the church. There as elsewhere the converted Pharisees still insisted on the necessity of the old Jewish rite. After the debate had progressed for some time, Peter rose and addressed the company. He had never forgotten that vision on the housetop; for him the question had been settled forever. In this last address, he reminded his hearers of how God had chosen him to speak to the Gentiles; that He had given them the Holy Ghost, "putting no difference between us and them." They were purified not by Jewish rites, but by faith in Jesus. Circumcision cannot save either them or us. He ended eloquently.

Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

This speech produced the desired effect. It was voted not to insist on circumcision; and on other matters a compromise was effected.

In the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, Peter does not appear to so good advantage as in Luke's account in Acts; in fact, it is almost impossible to believe that both Luke's narrative and Paul's narrative are accurate in all details. Perhaps Peter, though he knew the truth, was inconsistent in some matters, as are indeed practically all church members. Perhaps Paul in writing of the event magnified himself.

Personally I like to think of Peter as we see him last in that important meeting at Jerusalem. He, the impulsive spokesman of the twelve, who had atoned for his denial of Christ by being the most ardent leader in the earliest days of the church, he, who after the vision at Joppa, had in his own mind abolished all racial and social distinctions, on that final occasion gave every evidence of the new, universal spirit of Christianity.

IX

THE RISING TIDE

The Advance out of Palestine—The Christian Colonists—Barnabas, Paul, and Mark—Paulus and Paul—Elymas the Faker—The Quarrel and Departure of Mark—Paul's Sickness—Phrygian Mission Work—The Group at the Church Doors—Jews and Gentiles—Some Conservative Women—Therefore—Barnabas and Paul Among the Heathen—The Man Who Would Not be King—Jupiter and Mercury—Gods and Stones—Difficulty with Formalities—A Compromise—Separation of Paul and Barnabas—Strange Cause of an Important Expedition—Danger a Challenge—Timothy—Diplomacy of Paul—Meeting of Paul and Luke—Luke's Diary—Strange Event at Philippi—How to Become Saved—Preaching at Thessalonica—Hospitality and Courage of Jason—Paul Enters Athens—His Probable Emotion—Intellectual Hospitality of the Athenians—The Great Sermon—The Supreme Philosophical Principle—Mechanism, Life, and Personality—Athenian Scepticism—Athens and King Canute—The Rising Tide.

IX

THE RISING TIDE

The thirteenth chapter of the book of Acts opens with an incident which is not only of particular importance in the history of the early church, but also of more general and far-reaching significance. Something happened which changed the course of world-events; something which has made both Europeans and Americans of the twentieth century quite different from what they might conceivably otherwise be. This was the expedition of Paul and Barnabas to lands and folk outside of the eastern strip of the Mediterranean shore, away from Palestine where Christianity was born. It happened in this way.

Four or five leaders in the church at Antioch were one day fasting and praying, when they were conscious of a sudden inspiration. How would it be to detach their two most effective promoters, Saul and Barnabas, and let them carry the Good News to the outside world? It is encouraging to notice that the church in Syria felt strong enough to colonise; and they rightly believed that they would grow stronger by doing aggressive as well as conservative work. They did not come to this final

decision without meditating on the impulse; it was only after further fasting and more intense prayer, that they gave the two agents their apostolic benediction by the laying on of hands, and sent them forth.

The two men took with them John Mark, who was related to Barnabas. First they went fourteen miles to the coast town of Seleucia, and from that port they sailed west to Cyprus. This island, about fifty miles in width, was the original home of Barnabas; there were many devout Jews among the inhabitants; they had certainly heard of Christianity because Christian converts had escaped thither from the persecutions in Palestine. From many points of view, it was a good place to begin evangelistic work.

They came to the important town of Salamis, on the eastern end of the island, and immediately began to preach in the Jewish synagogues; apparently they met with little or no opposition, for none is mentioned. Then they travelled westward overland to Paphos, the Roman capital, about ten miles from the old town famous for the pagan worship of Aphrodite. The Roman Proconsul, whose name, it is interesting to note as a coincidence, was Sergius *Paulus,* is described as a "prudent man"; and indeed all through the New Testament, the officials sent out by the Roman Empire seem to have been both able and impartial. The Romans are certainly treated by the writers of New Testament narrative

in a favourable manner; and as we know, Paul was proud of his free birth as a Roman citizen. The Proconsul sent for the newly-arrived evangelists, "and desired to hear the word of God."

Good money is counterfeited; there are physicians and quacks; Christians and hypocrites. Even as Philip and Peter, in their missionary work in the city of Samaria, had found a competitor in a trickster named Simon, so here in Paphos there was a Jewish magician called Bar-jesus or Elymas, who had plied his business under the impartial or indifferent protection of the Roman magnate. The word Bar-jesus means "son of the saviour"; we shall see how Paul parodied the name when he attacked him. This sorcerer had evidently found the people as gullible as many everywhere and always have been; clairvoyants, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, and conductors of spirit-séances still clutch an enormous number of victims. Elymas the sorcerer, as the narrative calls him, had no mind to see his business ruined by the new preachers, whom he evidently regarded as professional rivals. He therefore denounced them, and endeavoured to persuade the Proconsul that they were fakers.

At this point (Acts XIII.9) Saul's name is changed to *Paul,* and he henceforth is called only by the new name. Originally his name may have been Saul Paul, like John Mark. Perhaps Luke began to call him Paul at this precise moment because that was also the name of the Roman gov-

ernor; it is certain that Paul himself would not have hesitated to capitalise that fact, if there were any influence to be obtained by doing so.

Paul, in the presence of the Roman, attacked Barjesus, twisting his name into "child of the devil." He called him a mischief-maker, and made the startling announcement that he would lose his sight for a season. Then, just as the impact of the truth had blinded Paul on the road to Damascus, the truth's representative now blinded Elymas, whose proud opposition was immediately changed into helplessness; "he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand."

This sudden transformation naturally made a powerful impression on the mind of the Proconsul, so much more remarkable was it than any of the magic he had seen performed by the sorcerer. His astonishment grew into belief in Paul's teaching. To have such a convert on the island was a notable triumph for the missionaries.

The Three then sailed away northwest to the mainland, debarking on the coast of Pamphylia. Shortly after this, Mark left them, and returned alone to Jerusalem. Why did he do this? What happened? We shall never know, but it seems to me possible that Paul had become too domineering, and Mark felt ill at ease in his presence. We know that on a later occasion Paul expressed his resentment that Mark had left them at this time; we know that more and more Paul was pushing ahead of

Barnabas, assuming the leadership of the little party, and the office of spokesman; we know that Mark was by way of being a cousin of Barnabas, and even among Baptists blood is often thicker than water. I suspect that Paul got on Mark's nerves, as he often did on those of others; and we know that the leaders of the apostolic church were no more free from pride and envy than are the leaders of the church today. At all events, Mark went home.

We might assume that there was no dissension at all; that Mark returned to Jerusalem simply to report progress in the work; but the fact that later Barnabas and Paul quarrelled about him, and that Paul brought up this exit from Pamphylia, seems to prove conclusively that there was trouble.

Paul and Barnabas went northwest into Phrygia, where the former fell into a sickness; no one knows what this malady was, but it may have been simply a result of weariness and exposure; it circumscribed his activities for a time, but did not prevent his preaching.

In the town of Antioch in Phrygia, on a certain Sabbath day, the two Christians entered the Jewish house of worship, and either because their fame had preceded them or because they had done some preaching during the preceding week or because they looked like "foreigners," they attracted the attention of the priests. Immediately after the double reading from the books of the law and of the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue hospitably

invited the strangers to address the audience. Both were invited but only Paul spoke. He always felt at home where there were Jews; and there were probably Gentiles also in the building, for, after "beckoning with his hand," he said, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience," which included in the invitation all devout people of whatever faith. He reviewed according to his custom, Israelitish history, beginning this time with the days of Moses in Egypt. He brought the person of Jesus before them, connecting him with the line of David. He told them of the resurrection and of forgiveness of sins. At this moment there may have been sarcastic laughter among his hearers, for he said sharply, citing their own prophets,

> Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

This was enough for the Jews: they left the synagogue, but the Gentiles remained, a sign of what was to come. Those who stayed wanted more; and demanded another sermon on the following Sabbath.

Around the church doors, at the conclusion of the service, some of the Jews and others who had been converted to the Jewish faith surrounded Paul and Barnabas, eager to hear more of the Gospel; it was a kind of enquiry meeting; the two evangelists made the most of this opportunity, and further explained the meaning of the life and death of Jesus.

During the next week, the presence of the new

men caused such a sensation in the city that on the next Sabbath practically everybody turned out to hear the preaching. This was naturally displeasing to the Jews, who publicly contradicted everything Paul said, and endeavoured to neutralise his efforts by ridicule. This merely increased the ardour of Paul and Barnabas. As Peter had learned by a celestial vision that the word of God was not bound but was to be free to all the children of men, so Paul and Barnabas discovered the same truth through the opposition of those who rejected it. Paul declared that God's message naturally was first given to you who are Jews; but he added sarcastically, since you "judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life," we are going to offer it to the Gentiles. He strengthened this course by quoting to them from their own prophet Isaiah.

That which the Jews rejected was welcomed by others. The Gentiles gladly received the new word, and were many of them there and then converted. An expression is used in the narrative in which the influence of Paul is apparent: "and as many as were *ordained* to eternal life believed."

Women are sometimes more conservative than men. Then Jews appealed to the orthodox women of the city, perhaps getting at the magistrates through their wives, with the result that Paul and Barnabas were deported. In the manner suggested by gospel teaching, "they shook off the dust of their feet against them," and travelled about eighty miles

southeast to the town of Iconium, where they immediately renewed evangelistic work. Here there were many Jews and many Greek-speaking Gentiles; the former poisoned the minds of the latter against the new faith. And the narrative proceeds to use a word that seems to have given trouble to the commentators. Describing the counter-mining of the Jews, "and made their minds evil affected against the brethren," the next verse (XIV:3) reads:

> Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord.

It is the word *therefore* that has caused the difficulty. But why? Was it not characteristic of Paul to increase his efforts when attacked? I like the word in that verse, and think that Luke may have smiled when he wrote it.

Public opinion became divided to such an extent that the city of Iconium was in an uproar; and indeed wherever Paul went he brought not peace but a sword. The Christian religion, like every other form of progress, advanced through strife, struggle, and against organised and determined opposition. Its enemies in Iconium succeeded in forming a political union of both Jews and Gentiles, and arranged to treat Paul and Barnabas like Stephen. To reverse the gospel text, we may say that the two men offered the bread of life and were given stones.

However, they did not wait for this, and escaped from the city, fleeing south to Lystra and Derbe, "and there they preached the gospel." The result

of every persecution, of every expulsion, was only to spread the Christian religion. In Lystra there were very few Jews; it was a colony of the Romans, and Paul and Barnabas found themselves among heathen. But whether the inhabitants understood their language or not mattered little, because Paul in a sensational manner cured a cripple as soon as he perceived "that he had faith to be healed." This made a tremendous impression: the people shouted in their own tongue that the gods had come down and taken the likeness of men—little did they know how nearly they expressed the central fact in the Christian religion.

They called Barnabas Zeus (Roman Jupiter), the King of Heaven, and Paul Hermes (Roman Mercury), "because he was the chief speaker." They seemed to have had no difficulty in thus distributing the divine appellations. Barnabas was undoubtedly a person of magnificent, even majestic appearance; whereas we know that there was nothing attractive superficially either in Paul's face or his figure; it was when he began to speak that he drew and held public attention. The high priest of Zeus seems to have felt no sense of blasphemy; he was in fact surprisingly accommodating. He came out of his temple with oxen appropriately decked with flowers, to do public sacrifice in the presence of the people.

It will be remembered that the Roman Cornelius had endeavoured to worship Peter as a god: and

had desisted only when Peter told him he was no more divine then Cornelius himself.

Paul and Barnabas were smitten with horror. They rent their clothes and in exactly the opposite fashion followed by the two men in Kipling's story (*The Man Who Would be King*), they endeavoured to persuade the crowd that they were nothing more than human. It took courage to adopt this course, but neither was afraid. They boldly called the religion of Zeus vanity, and preached the doctrine of the everliving omnipotent Spirit. It was with the greatest difficulty that they could persuade the people not to deify them. It is probable that they would have gone on to preach Christ, but unfortunately their enemies in Iconium, which was only twenty miles away, had followed them, and began to exert a hostile influence. It is characteristic of the temper of mobs and of the level of intelligence of public opinion, that the simple inhabitants of Lystra who had insisted on worshipping Paul and Barnabas, now attacked them with stones. Paul was stunned, was dragged as a corpse out of the city and left for dead. While the disciples were weeping around him, he rose up, and with astounding audacity, went back into the town. The next day he and Barnabas travelled to the neighbouring town of Derbe, about thirty miles to the southeast, where they preached with success. Then, knowing that the new churches needed strengthening, they at the risk of their lives returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Phrygian

Antioch. They implored the converts to stand fast, and not to be afraid of persecution, setting them a magnificent example in their own reappearance.

It was at this time that a regular church organisation was effected. Paul and Barnabas in these various towns appointed elders and overseers so that the Christian communities would cohere in definitely constituted societies. The result is in evidence today in the year of our Lord 1924. Individual Christian faith is always strengthened by community worship.

Then the two missionaries, weary but happy, returned to the coast, sailed to Syria, and were back in Antioch after an absence of perhaps a year and a half. We can easily imagine how eagerly the Christians there, who had had no news, must have greeted the return of the two emissaries, and listened to the thrilling story of their adventures. The work that had been done was permanent; and its influence on Paul himself can hardly be exaggerated.

We saw in a previous essay that there was a difficulty that might have split the early church. The old Jewish laws and customs were not to be thrown over without a struggle. The Jews in the new Christian society at Jerusalem felt themselves to be superior to the Gentile converts, and some of them insisted that the latter must submit to Jewish rites. That these rites should be necessary to salvation may seem to us in the twentieth century ridiculous, and out of harmony with the teachings

of Jesus in the Gospels; but it is human to make mountains out of molehills, and there were many who had more faith in a correct ritual than in a clean heart. Paul and Barnabas had made their missionary journey in foreign lands and even among heathen, and had apparently not even mentioned the Jewish law to the latter, but had accepted them in the Christian church on profession of their faith in Jesus. Accordingly, a hot dispute arose; in Luke's narrative of the church at Antioch, "Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them." The matter was settled as all quarrels and differences of opinion should be settled—by a conference. Paul and Barnabas travelled from Antioch to Jerusalem, taking advantage of the opportunity to preach in various towns along the road; and in Jerusalem, after a long discussion, the apostle James made an address, which resulted in a compromise. Certain sins were expressly forbidden to the Gentile members, but circumcision and other rites were no longer to be required. This resolution was put in writing, and carried back to the church in Antioch by a large company, including Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas.

Thus what might have been a serious disaster was averted by a conference of Christian people in amicable discussion and prayer. Good sense.

After a considerable stay in Antioch there came a time when the strenuous nature of Paul asserted itself. He was uneasy and restless, and the memories

of his former excursion, in which as so often happens, the hardships were forgotten and the pleasant excitement alone remembered, impelled him once more to set forth and carry the Gospel to those dwelling in darkness. So one day he suggested to Barnabas that they make together a second expedition, in order to see how the new churches they had founded were flourishing, and to establish others. Unfortunately a difference of opinion arose between the two men that caused their permanent separation. Barnabas insisted on taking his kinsman Mark. But Paul disliked Mark, probably because the young man had left them on their previous journey, and he now told Barnabas that Mark must not under any circumstances accompany them. Apparently Mark loved Paul as little as he was loved: the two men, for some reason, were "unsympathetic." Barnabas would not go without Mark and Paul would not go with him; all three being quite human. Accordingly the two great evangelists separated; Barnabas sailed away to his old home in Cyprus, taking Mark, and Paul, with Silas as a companion, travelled northwest overland through Syria and Cilicia.

This journey, begun on an impulse, and then, because of a quarrel, taking a course other than that which was originally planned, became of vital importance not only to the new church, but to Europeans and Americans today. Paul was led for the first time to visit Europe, and to establish the Gospel in the cultivated circles of the western world. In

addition to this salient fact, he met on this expedition first Timothy and then Luke, both of whom, and especially the latter, were to be of immense assistance in the propagation of the Christian religion. It is difficult therefore to overestimate the importance of what is called Paul's second missionary journey.

With characteristic audacity, Paul, accompanied by Silas, went first of all back to Derbe and Lystra, deliberately selecting the towns most unhealthy for him; but to Paul danger was always a challenge, and often constituted an irresistible temptation. During his absence there was in Lystra a young convert named Timothy, who had been active in the Christian community, and exceedingly popular; his reputation had spread among the churches in neighbouring towns. Timothy's mother was a devout Jew, and his father a Greek. Paul liked the young man, as who did not? He decided to take him along. But first he circumcised him.

Which leads me to two questions. Why had this not been done before? and why did Paul do it now?

We know that Timothy's mother had brought him up from childhood instructing him thoroughly in the Old Testament. It is of course possible that while his father made no objection to this, he had refused to have him circumcised. There must have been some reason for this omission, and perhaps that is as good a conjecture as any other.

But when Paul had ceased to believe in the neces-

sity or in the efficacy of this, why did he insist on it now, and in a manner that, as he calculated it would, drew public attention?

Well, he did it to please the Jews, of whom there were many in Lystra. It is possible that his doing it really showed his indifference more than if he had publicly denounced the rite. Paul was strenuous, combative, fearless; but he was also a practical politician; and as he himself said on a later occasion, there was nothing short of sacrificing a principle that he would not do in order to further the cause of Christ. With the Jews he behaved like a Jew: with the Romans like a Roman: with other Gentiles, like them. If in any superficial way he could draw attention to the new religion he would do so. Now to him circumcision, apart from its historical interest, had no significance or importance; and to himself he said, "If you insist on circumcision, let us by all means have it; if you are against it, let us dispense with it. It is of no consequence anyhow, but if by conforming to this law (which to Paul now meant nothing more than a change of costume) we can bring more people into the church, it is well." In his letter to the Corinthians Paul not only defended his action on this and on similar occasions, but held himself up as an example to others:

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain

the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law . . . that I might by all means save some.

Furthermore, he wished to show to the Jews that although a new religion had taken the place of the old rites, there was nothing in it antagonistic to the ancient régime. Let Jews keep their customs, and Gentiles theirs: provided all put Christ and his teaching first.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy accordingly left Lystra, intending to carry on their work in Asia; but they received intimations that they were more needed elsewhere. They travelled northwest, and finally reached the seaport town of Troas. There Paul had a vivid dream. A man of Macedonia appeared to him and cried, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

Another event of high importance occurred at Troas, because it was there that apparently the first meeting between Paul and Luke took place. In the book of Acts, Luke had been writing a narrative, as if the events had been obtained from some one else: but in Acts XVI:10, we have the word *we*.

And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

Fortunately Luke kept a diary, and he now proceeds to transcribe from it. Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke sailed from Troas with the first favourable wind. They crossed the sea to Neapolis, and thence to Philippi, which, according to Luke, was the chief

city of that part of Macedonia. It is quite possible that Paul may have first met Luke through the need of the physician's professional services; he later calls him the beloved physician.

On the first Sabbath day in Philippi the friends went out of the city to a place on the bank of the river where the Jews habitually worshipped; they took advantage of the opportunity to preach the gospel. There was a devout woman named Lydia who became converted, was baptized, and invited the four men to come and stay in her house. The church grew apace, and later Paul wrote them, in the letter to the Philippians, an affectionate greeting.

A strange event happened at Philippi, which led to one even stranger. Some scoundrels there had got hold of a girl who had some pretended gift of divination. In the manner of fakers, she cried out in a way calculated to impress the credulous. She followed Paul and his companions, annoying them with her shrieks. After they had endured this for some days, Paul rebuked the evil spirit in her, and with the departure of the same she lost her power of prophesying, and with it her source of income.

Her managers, being angry at this result, seized Paul and Silas, when their two companions were absent, brought them to the city magistrates, complained that they were not only disturbers of the peace, but were dangerous to the Roman rule. This last charge had the usual effect; the mob rose against the strangers. Paul and Silas were beaten, and cast

into prison to await trial. There they aroused the curiosity of the other prisoners by spending the night in prayer, when suddenly there was an earthquake, which shook open the prison doors. The warden started to kill himself, knowing what awaited him if his charges escaped; but Paul reassured him.

A dramatic scene followed. The jailer ordered a light to be made, and with this torch, he came shaking with fear into the presence of the two men. He asked them what he should do to be saved, and received an answer so utterly contrary to anything that he could have anticipated, that his fear must have changed into extreme bewilderment. He was told to *believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ. After the gospel had been explained to him he received it joyfully, put balm on the prisoners' bruises, and was baptized before morning. His whole household embraced the new faith, and they had a festive breakfast.

At daybreak the magistrates sent word that the two men should be released. But when the good jailer told them the news, another surprise awaited him. Paul said boldly that the magistrates, who had appeared so anxious to serve Rome, had actually beaten two Romans without a hearing, and that they had better come and apologise. Undoubtedly in this demonstration Paul saw a way to impress both them and the city. The rulers came humbly, and entreated Paul and Silas to depart; they entered

again the hospitable home of Lydia, comforted the household, and left the town.

They travelled westward along the coast to Thessalonica, an important city. There were many Jews among the inhabitants, and Paul in his customary fashion went directly into the synagogue, and endeavoured to prove from the Old Testament that the expected Messiah was Jesus himself, and that it was now the time to worship him and believe in his resurrection from the dead. This he did on three successive Sabbath days. He was particularly successful with the Greeks, less so with the Jews; and the latter, appealing to the worst element in the city rabble, surrounded the house of Jason, where the missionaries were being entertained. Jason had succeeded in effectually hiding his guests. His hospitality, his faith, and his courage should not be forgotten; for the mob dragged him before the rulers of the town, accusing him of having harboured leaders of sedition. They went so far as to accuse him of treason, for they asserted that the new faith exalted Jesus as a king instead of the Roman emperor. Jason played the man, refused to betray his guests, and must have made an able defence; for he was simply required to give bonds to keep the peace and was then discharged. Immediately after this, he and his friends got Paul and Silas out of the city by night, and sent them westward to Berea, where they made such an impression on the people, that many of them began to study the Old Testament

earnestly, to discover if the Jesus preached by Paul was in reality the long-awaited Saviour.

But the same thing happened that had taken place in Asia Minor, at Iconium and elsewhere; the Thessalonian Jews heard of the preaching in Berea, came thither, and stirred up the populace so that it was not safe for Paul to remain. Silas and Timothy remained in Berea, while Paul disappeared, a few faithful friends and disciples accompanying him all the way south to the city of Athens.

It is interesting to speculate as to the nature of Paul's feelings when he found himself for the first time in this great and famous centre of art and learning. In a certain sense he felt at home. He was emphatically a city man, cosmopolitan in manners and ideas, and his profound learning made him a brother of the university men in Athens. The philosophical bent of his mind drew him naturally toward the large number of students who were interested in metaphysical speculation. I think that after his long travels in wild countries and in small villages he must have thoroughly enjoyed himself here, and felt a real satisfaction in talking on equal terms with cultivated men. But his monotheistic Jewish faith and his devotion to Jesus alike made him sorrowful at the universal pagan worship, and the innumerable evidences of superstition, represented by the signs of worship of so many gods.

The Athenians were intellectually hospitable; Paul had many interesting discussions and debates

with the philosophers of the Stoic and of the Epicurean schools. He quickly became known, so that his daily appearance on the streets was greeted by groups of people, who took pleasure in asking him questions; there is no doubt that his conversation was particularly interesting to the inquisitive Greeks, although it was natural that some of the professional philosophers ridiculed him, both because his doctrine seemed absurd, and because they were envious. However, the interest was sufficiently general so that he was invited to deliver a public address. He was brought to the Areopagus, which may refer either to a place or to a council, where he made one of the greatest speeches on religion that the world has ever heard.

He began by observing that his hearers were all deeply interested in religion. In addition to the number of statues he had seen there was one especially that had attracted his attention—an altar addressed *To The Unknown God.* With this text, he not only preached to those pagans and ironical sceptics the doctrine of monotheism, but expressed himself in language that closely conforms to the best accepted philosophical ideas of the twentieth century. He quoted from one of their own authors (Aratus), as a foreign visitor to an American audience might quote from Emerson. We are the offspring of God. God is not a person who dwells in any particular place, nor can he be worshipped by man-made idols. He is the infinite and eternal energy, the one source

of life, the supreme will, out of which all things proceed. Instead of being in a distant spot, he is really closer to us than our own bodies. In him we live and move and have our being.

Remember that when Paul uttered that phrase, he was not emotionally pleading; he was stating a supreme philosophical principle. As Tennyson said, many centuries later,

"Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

In Professor J. S. Haldane's book, *Mechanism, Life and Personality* (1923), we find "When we examine personality more closely we find that just as the life of an organism is no mere individual life, but continuous without break from generation to generation, so is personality among other personalities. We feel in, see in, exist in, that supreme Personality whom we call God, whose existence we recognise in the recognition of duty to our fellowmen and fellow-animals, present, past, and future: also to a truth which transcends practical truth for our individual selves, or for our generation."

Up to this point in Paul's discourse it is probable that the audience listened with grave attention, and perhaps some with intellectual sympathy; but when he went on from monotheism to the story of Christ, he lost the presence of many of his audience, and the respect of most of those who remained. The Athenians were interested in philosophy and theology,

but they did not care to be told of any necessity for repentance; I can conceive of no more difficult audience on that theme. And when Paul went on to speak of the resurrection, many in the crowd burst into guffaws. Still, there were a few who were impressed. Some found a personal force in the speaker that led them to renew the invitation to speak at a future time. One man, Dionysius, who was a member of the council, was actually converted; thus Paul had captured one in the heart of the citadel. And there was a woman, Damaris by name, who became a Christian, and "others with them."

Athens was favoured in its history not only by being the home of Greek literature, drama, plastic art and architecture, but by having as a familiar presence on her streets the greatest human teacher of antiquity and the greatest human teacher of modern religion. It is pleasant to think that both Socrates and Paul spoke their convictions, teaching morality and truth in the same market-place. The Athenians killed their foremost wise man, and they greeted Paul with laughter; but both added to the imperishable glory of the city.

The condition of Greek thought at the time of the apostle, and the natural scepticism among the intelligentsia, together with the pessimism that so often accompanies a lack of personal religion, has never been better portrayed than by Browning, in his character Cleon, who wrote to a king

> Thou canst not think a mere barbarian Jew
> As Paulus proves to be, one circumcised,
> Hath access to a secret shut from us?
> Thou wrongest our philosophy, O King,
> In stooping to inquire of such an one,
> As if his answer could impose at all!

Yet both Cleon and the King were as powerless to drive back the rising, encircling, conquering tide of Christianity as was old Canute to check the invasion of the sea.

X

PAUL'S ADVENTURES IN EUROPE AND ASIA

Paul and Paris To-day—Off for Corinth—Two Jewish Friends—Anger of Paul—Gallio and Roman Justice —Wisdom and Impartiality of Gallio—Letter-Writing—The Voyage to Ephesus—First Appearance of Apollos—His Personal Magnetism—Teaching Religion in a Philosopher's Hall—The Possessed—Harsh Reception of Frauds—Burning of Valuable Books—Images in Ephesus—Religious Zeal and Commercial Enterprise—The Slogan of the Mob—A Wise Chairman—Fighting with Beasts?—Resumption of Luke's Diary—The Sleeping Young Man—An All-night Service—Sailing by Ephesus—Affecting Farewell to the Elders—The Voyage to Palestine—Paul's Arrival in Jerusalem—Long Hair—Paul's Compromise—Paul Described by Luke and Described by Himself—The Jewish Mob and the Roman Regulars —Captain Lysias—His Honesty and Fairness—His Surprise at Paul's Citizenship—Paul as a Linguist—Paul's Political Ability in Dividing His Audience—The Prisoner Marches Away with an Enormous Convoy.

X

PAUL'S ADVENTURES IN EUROPE AND ASIA

Paul had as much success in Athens as a missionary would have in Paris; he travelled southwest about fifty miles, and reached the city of Corinth, where he stayed a year and a half. Corinth was "politically and commercially much more important than Athens." Four roads of the world united there; the narrow isthmus on which it was situated cemented the northern and southern portions of Greece; and the seas on the east and the west brought travellers from both directions. It was indeed a centre of communication. Furthermore, it was a Roman capital of the conquered province of Greece, called Achaia; the Roman proconsul had his palace there. In ancient times a proud maritime city, it fell with the rest of Greece before the Roman invaders in 146 B.C., who reduced it in such thorough fashion that for a century it was no more important than a village. Exactly one hundred years later, however, Julius Caesar refounded it. Then it throve rapidly, becoming one of the capitals of civilisation. There was much mercantile and commercial prosperity, and a high percentage of

intellectual and artistic culture. It was so famous also for its debauchery that the word *Corinthian* became a slang name for libertines. Hither came Paul.

At first, as still was his custom, he associated principally with the Jews. There were a good many Jews who had fled from Rome in consequence of a decree exiling them, issued by the emperor Claudius. Shortly before Paul's arrival, a Jew named Aquila, and his wife Priscilla, had arrived from Italy; they invited Paul to stay in their house, and as both he and they were familiar with the trade of tent-making, all three for a time lived and worked together in harmony. Every Sabbath day Paul preached to a mixed audience in the Corinthian synagogue; he was joined by Silas and Timothy, who had come from the north; and with these able and devoted helpers, the Jews had the gospel preached to them. So far from appreciating this opportunity, they publicly opposed Paul in ribald language, ridiculing the new religion. The apostle became exceedingly angry; he shook his garments at them as if he were shaking off dirt; harking back to what the Jewish congregation had shouted at the trial of Jesus, he cried, "Your blood be upon your own heads!" and he announced that henceforth he would devote himself to the Gentiles.

In pursuance of this plan, he left his friends Aquila and Priscilla, and lived with a devout man named Justus, whose house was almost next door to

the synagogue. In spite of the general hostility of the Jews, Paul made one exceedingly important convert, the very ruler of the synagogue, named Crispus, whose courage under the circumstances must have equalled his faith; and when Crispus and all his family joined the Christian church, many others believed and were admitted. In a dream by night Paul received heavenly inspiration to continue the good work, and he redoubled his efforts.

An interesting character now appears upon the scene. This was Gallio, the Roman governor of Achaia; he was a powerful and astute statesman, and probably a highly educated man, as he was a close blood relative of two of the most famous men of letters in the world. His brother was the philosopher and dramatist Seneca, his nephew the distinguished poet Lucan. Gallio dealt with the quarrel between the Jews and Paul in a characteristically Roman way. The mob dragged Paul before the governor, and said that the apostle was teaching a religion that was illegal. Before Paul could get a chance to speak, which apparently he was quite willing to do, the Roman dismissed the mob, the prisoner, and the case, with considerable asperity. He asked the same question Pilate had asked, *What has he done?* Gallio, without trying to conceal his contempt for the Jews, told them that if they had a charge against Paul of having committed some overt act, he would consider the accusation; but if it is one of the tiresome and futile disputes that you

are always having over your religion and your law, I will not allow such matters to come before this court. He spoke a word to the Roman soldiers, who hustled the mob out of the place of judgment. Then the Greeks, who had accompanied Paul and his tormentors, immediately took advantage of the situation caused by Gallio's decision, and gave Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, a severe beating. Thus the Jews, who had brought Paul to the governor with the idea of having him punished, had the humiliation of seeing their leader receive what they had intended for their victim. The assault on Sosthenes made a sensation; but Gallio refused to interfere. He was probably glad to see him paid in his own coin. The significant statement by Luke, "Gallio cared for none of these things," used to be interpreted in Sunday Schools as showing the hardness of his wicked heart. But I think it should increase our admiration for him. He was a high Roman official, determined to maintain law and order, and willing to punish immediately any criminal convicted of any particular crime; but toward verbal debates and disputes he maintained an attitude of supreme indifference, and like all wise men, apparently believed in freedom of speech.

While Paul was in Corinth, he wrote his first letter, to the Thessalonians. Timothy had brought him good tidings from those people, and what was especially important, a cash contribution, which enabled Paul to give up tent-making and devote him-

self wholly to the gospel. So that made doubly free by this welcome gift and by the attitude of the Roman governor, he stayed a long while in Corinth, preaching the word. His eternal restlessness, however, did not permit him to stay indefinitely. He made up his mind to return to Palestine. First he travelled east about nine miles to Cenchrea; there he had his hair cut. He had made some vow to let his hair grow until something he wished had been accomplished; it had to do with the work in Corinth. This particular kind of vow was common enough among the Jews, and is by no means unknown today among other people.

From Cenchrea Paul sailed away across the Aegean Sea to Ephesus, taking with him the faithful Aquila and Priscilla, who apparently settled down in that city. Paul seems to have made only one speech in Ephesus, and perhaps stayed in that seaport only long enough to get a ship to the east; his speech made a deep impression, and the Jews asked him to stay longer. Paul had said bitterly in Corinth that henceforth he would leave the Jews alone, and concern himself with the Gentiles; but his racial instinct was evidently too strong for him to adhere to such a programme, and the synagogue always made the most convenient place and opportunity in which to preach. He promised that if it should be possible, he would return to the Ephesians; then he embarked on the voyage to Caesarea. How long it took a sailing vessel to make the jour-

ney I do not know. He had intended on leaving Ephesus, to go to Jerusalem; but apparently something happened to make him change his mind, for on landing at Caesarea, he went up from the docks into the city, gave his salutation to the church, and departed straightway for Antioch, returning to his base from a long and immeasurably significant expedition. He had been away about two years and a half.

While he remained in Antioch, rumours more or less vague reached him to the effect that the missionary work he had done in the churches at Galatia was being undermined by the strict Jewish party, who insisted that circumcision and many other points in the Jewish law and ritual were absolutely binding on Christians. Accordingly Paul wrote from Antioch his letter to the Galatians, which is a declaration of independence for all Christian believers. But he felt that they needed his presence and his voice; hence, "after he had spent some time" in Antioch, his eternally restless spirit drove him again on the open road; he travelled through Galatia and Phrygia, "strengthening all the disciples."

Here Luke interpolates in his narrative an account of a new and powerful recruit, Apollos, who had a gift of persuasive speech, and who was no less effective through the amiability of his character. There is something peculiarly lovable about this man. Apollos was highly educated; he was born in Alexandria, and had a thorough knowledge of the

Old Testament. He was a disciple of John the Baptist, believing heartily in the Messiah, but not having yet in his own mind identified Messiah or the Christ with Jesus of Nazareth. He came over to Ephesus, and began to preach there in the manner of John the Baptist, calling sinners to repentance, and telling his audiences of the speedy appearance of the long-awaited Messiah, whom the prophets had announced. One day there happened to be among his hearers in the synagogue Aquila and Priscilla, who, it will be remembered, had settled in the city of Ephesus. After the sermon, they invited the preacher to their house, and explained to him the gospel as they had learned it in Corinth from Paul. Apollos was excited and happy to know that the Scriptures had been fulfilled; he embraced the new faith with all his heart, and determined to make an expedition into Greece, where his peculiar talents and training would make him especially effective. He carried letters from the Ephesian Christians, asking their brethren to receive him hospitably in the cities of Achaia. When Apollos arrived in Corinth, he convinced his audiences "mightily," proving to the Jews from their own prophets that Jesus the Nazarene was the Divine Son of God. He was indeed so successful that, as we learn from Paul's letters to the Corinthians, there were some who preferred his teaching to that of Paul, and arrayed themselves as of the party of Apollos. But this caused no friction, as had happened in the

friendship with Barnabas; no one could dislike Apollos.

Meanwhile Paul, travelling and preaching throughout Asia Minor, reached Ephesus. There he found a little group who had apparently been convinced by the teaching of Apollos before he had embraced belief in Jesus; and seeing that they exhibited none of the spiritual elevation that should accompany Christian faith, Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit, and to his surprise, found that they did not know what he was talking about. Further questions about baptism elicited the information that they had been baptized as John's disciples; but after Paul had explained to them the truth, they were all baptized in the name of Jesus, which rite had now become the prerequisite for entering the church. He then gave them the apostolic benediction by laying his hands on them; immediately they felt exalted, and were lifted into that state of ecstasy that is so frequently described among the early Christians. "And all the men were about twelve." Reinforced by the ardour of these twelve disciples, and by all those who had been convinced by Aquila and Priscilla, the church grew so rapidly that Paul was able to speak publicly in the synagogue for three months. But eventually the same thing happened in Ephesus that had happened elsewhere; the orthodox Jews organised, and addressed audiences against Christianity, so that Paul once more forsook the syna-

gogue, drew from its congregation those who adhered to him, and received permission to use the hall where a philosopher named Tyrannus met his pupils; there Paul taught every day in the week. He did this two years; and his disciples went out and founded churches all over Asia Minor, some of which Paul was never able to visit in person. Ephesus was a convenient base of operations, and became a kind of mother-church.

Paul cured many of the sick; and taking advantage of the superstitious and credulous nature of the populace, some gipsy Jews thought that they might financially profit by the situation. A number of these fakers began to visit those who were "possessed" and to call out over them the name of the Lord Jesus. One incident is mentioned that is not without its humorous aspect. Among these exorcists were the sons of a Jew named Sceva; they visited a house where a man was confined who was suffering from demoniacal possession. The visitors went through their rigmarole, when to their amazement and discomfiture, the delirious man shouted, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know: but who are ye?" He followed this ironical question by suddenly leaping upon them and giving them a terrific beating, "so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

This incident attracted much attention; and many "magicians," sorcerers, and other tricksters came forward, confessed their swindling, brought the im-

plements of their magic and their strange books together, and had a public bonfire. Thus was their faith strikingly proved by their works; for their books and apparatus were extremely costly, and the loss of them amounted in money to a considerable fortune, about ten thousand dollars, worth far more then than now. Although this burnt offering had a salutary influence on the public, I cannot help regretting the loss of those quaint books. I wish they had buried them instead of burning them, and that they were now available for scholars.

While Paul was busied with plans for further travel, which included the whole range of land and sea from Jerusalem on the east to Rome on the west, a sudden tumult broke out in Ephesus, which reveals the spirit of the mob as it has manifested itself in all times and all places. Ephesus was the centre of the worship of Diana, or as she was called in Greek, Artemis; there was a temple which had stood for centuries, and a curious statue of uncertain age and origin, which had long been identified with the worship of the Goddess. Even as in Russia every household had its ikon, so the Ephesians loved to have in their homes small images of Artemis, and the manufacturers of these profited by the custom. It had been bad enough to have Jews in Ephesus, whose monotheism made them uncompromising iconoclasts; but the climax was reached when the increasingly powerful Christian organisation declaimed publicly against the use of

idols. The leading silversmith of the town was named Demetrius; he naturally became alarmed at the losses in his occupation—for every time an Ephesian was converted to Christianity one demand for images ceased—and so Demetrius organised the metal-workers of the city, skilfully combining their religious fervour with their material interests. He told them that Paul would destroy their holy religion and lessen their profits. All the mob needed was a catchword; somebody furnished this by shouting *Great is Diana of the Ephesians!* This was instantly taken up like organised cheering, and the din became terrific. The mob seized two of Paul's travelling companions, and hustled them into the theatre, which held something like 25,000 persons. Paul was determined to enter, but was restrained by his friends, many of whom were influential citizens who admired him, whether they were Christians or not. No one has rated the average intelligence of a mob better than Luke:

> Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

The Jewish party put forward Alexander as a speaker, hoping that he could pacify the throng. But the moment his racial features were recognised, the audience shouted in rhythmical unison for two hours, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians!*

The city was extremely fortunate in its official presiding officer, a firm, wise, diplomatic and just

man. I wish his name had been preserved. He allowed the crowd to yell until they were so hoarse they could yell no more. Then, taking advantage of a sudden lull, and of the authority belonging to his office, he succeeded in getting them to listen to him. Whether or not he himself had any faith in Diana is doubtful; but he used their faith for political purposes. Of course, said he, we all know the statue of Artemis fell out of heaven from Zeus; we are all worshippers of her, and we know that the faith is impregnable, and that no soap-box orator can injure it. These Christians are not church-robbers or blasphemers; if Demetrius and the workmen have a real case in law, "the law is open," and they can bring it through the proper channels; but if it is merely and purely a religious matter, that can be settled in an assembly called for the purpose. We are responsible to the Roman governor for today's tumult, and I advise everybody to go peaceably to his home, lest damage be done for which we shall be called to account.

Nothing could better illustrate the firm grip that Roman rule had over conquered provinces than this speech of the Moderator, who had evidently learned something of Roman law himself, and whose address would have been a credit even to Gallio.

The Chairman announced the meeting adjourned, and the mob, hypnotised by one strong man, silently dispersed.

The incident, so dramatically narrated by Luke, also proves that Paul and the Christians never countenanced anything like a political insurrection or a revolt against the Roman authorities; they always upheld the law. Fear God. Honour the King.

What did Paul mean in I Corinthians XV:32, when he said, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus?" Did he mean that he had, or had not? For he might have meant, "Suppose as so many Christians have been forced to do, I had given up my life in the arena," what good would it do if the dead do not rise? Christians who were sent into the pit with the beasts did not escape. Or did he by the "wild beasts" refer to the dangerous mob at the Diana outbreak, for indeed a mob might at any time thus be accurately described? He was certainly in peril of his life on this and on many other occasions. (The phrase "after the manner of men" is translated by Ballantine, "humanly speaking.")

It was evidently not safe to remain in Ephesus while the excitement caused by Demetrius was at fever heat; Paul departed for Macedonia and thence south into Greece. Unfortunately we have no details of this journey; Luke, who often is so circumstantial, is at other times more than concise. Undoubtedly Paul visited Corinth again, and may have written his letter to the Romans from that city. I wish I knew whether he stopped at Athens,

and if so, what happened. He stayed in Greece three months, and it is probable that he regarded the expedition as unsuccessful, otherwise we should know more about it. We know that once more the Jews formed a plot against his life, for he had taken passage on a ship from Greece to Syria; discovery of this conspiracy altered his plans at the last moment, and he went overland northward again into Macedonia. In Philippi (most fortunately for us) he was joined by Luke, who abruptly resumes his diary. A little group of faithful disciples, men from Berea, from Thessalonica, from Derbe, and from Asiatic towns, of whom Timothy was the most important, were sent ahead by sea, and waited at Troas until Paul and Dr. Luke should arrive. Finally the apostle and the physician sailed together from Philippi. The wind that had been so favourable on their earlier western voyage must now have been dead ahead, for it took them five days to reach Troas; there the party abode together a whole week. Sunday and not Saturday was now the Christian day, although whenever Paul wished to address the Jews in their synagogues, he had to speak on Saturdays; on a Sunday in Troas, Paul preached to the assembly at communion; they had what we should call a watch-night service, and Paul's address lasted till midnight. The room where he spoke was brilliantly illuminated, and what with the lights, and the lateness of the hour, and the length of the sermon, a young man named

Eutychus, who had found a place on the window sill, fell first asleep and then out of the window, and was so stunned by the fall that everyone thought he was dead. Instead of being angry with him for going to sleep and for interrupting the sermon in this sensational manner, Paul took the young man affectionately in his arms, reassured the company, and Eutychus rejoined them, ate and drank, none the worse for the incident, to the amazement and delight of all. After the general excitement had subsided, Paul went on talking until daylight. There were no further casualties; but Eutychus must have been a man of mark in Troas for a long time.

In the morning, Paul went on foot about twenty miles south to the port of Assos; Luke and the others travelled thither by sea. Perhaps Paul felt the need of exercise, although he had been up all night; perhaps he wanted to be alone; perhaps the sea was rough; coasting trips are seldom agreeable, though the prevailing wind seems to have been offshore. When the ship arrived at Assos, Paul was on the wharf; he embarked. Sailing in a general southerly direction, the next stopping-place was Mitylene. The following day the ship passed Chios, and the day after stopped at Samos; and the day after that Paul and his friends debarked at Miletus. It will be observed that the ship made no call at Ephesus, or if it did, Paul remained on board. He evidently had strong reasons for not

reappearing in that city. Luke writes, "For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church."

Now Miletus is thirty-five miles from Ephesus; and to send thither for the elders and to wait for their arrival, would seem to have taken more time than to speak to them in the larger city. It seems certain therefore that Paul believed there would be trouble if he entered Ephesus, and that his arrest might not only result in a trial and sentence of death, or even if there should be acquittal, he might be seriously delayed. He certainly had some reason more urgent than the saving of a day or two, for preferring not to enter Ephesus. Indeed he never saw the city again.

The elders of the Ephesus church came eagerly to Miletus to see Paul; and there is something deeply affecting in this farewell scene, which it had been necessary to hold at a safe distance. Luke's diary reports Paul's actual words with fidelity. He reminded the flock, as was his custom, of his own boldness and fearlessness in preaching the gospel to Jews and Greeks; then he told them he must go to Jerusalem, although danger and persecution certainly awaited him there; so long as he lived, his daily portion must be bonds and afflictions; but he felt his life to be of no importance except for

the opportunity to preach Christ. Great sorrow overclouded the little company when Paul told them that they would never see him on earth again; they must therefore carry on faithfully, for they would have enemies and traitors. Whenever they were in danger of being drawn away from the truth, let them remember Paul and what he had foretold, and stand fast. He gave them his benediction; he besought them to be generous, and to remember that it was more blessed to give than to receive. Then they all knelt down together and prayed; they embraced Paul affectionately, and wept at the thought of the impending and final separation. So with tears and embraces and words of exhortation and undying friendship, they brought him to the ship and saw it carry the Apostle out of their sight.

I feel certain that these were the actual words of Paul because the speech is so disjointed and incoherent, like all sincere farewells. There is no order, no progression in the thought; it is autobiographical, hortatory, and after the benediction, another autobiographical postword. Such is the manner in all lands and in all times in which friends undergo the heartbreaking experience of parting.

The ship made a straight southerly run to Cos, thence to Rhodes, and having rounded the corner, sailed east to Patara; there they had to take another ship bound to Phoenicia. They sailed south of the island of Cyprus, and landed at the old city of Tyre, to which port the cargo had been con-

signed. While the ship was discharging her freight, which in those days took considerable time,—in this instance a week—they held a meeting with the Christians in Tyre, for there seemed to be by this time some Christians everywhere. They told Paul that it would be exceedingly dangerous for him to go to Jerusalem, but they failed to shake his determination. The faithful company, men, women and children, all came with Paul and his friends down to the shore; they kneeled on the beach and prayed, which must have been a strange spectacle to the sailors and longshoremen. The ship sailed south to Ptolemais, a stopping-place half-way between Tyre and Caesarea; they spent a day with the Christians in that town. On they went to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist. This was not the Philip of the original twelve, but the man who had been associated with Stephen as one of the Seven, who had preached in Samaria, and had baptized the famous Ethiopian. Philip had four daughters, all of whom had the gift of public speaking. While they were there, Agabus, the prophet who had previously predicted the famine, joined them, and in the dramatic manner of the prophets of old, he impressively seized Paul's girdle, bound his own hands and feet, signifying what the Jews would do to Paul if he entered Jerusalem. Then Luke and the Caesarean Christians united their pleading to dissuade Paul from his purpose. Paul gently reproved them, saying that they were only

making his difficult undertaking more difficult. "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Seeing that he could not be shaken, they refrained from further efforts.

It was a journey of more than fifty miles from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Paul, Luke, a man from Cyprus named Mnason, and several Caesarean disciples travelled together. They were received by the Christians in Jerusalem with enthusiasm, but the next day were confronted by that same tiresome controversy that wrought such havoc in the early church and really came near to destroying it. This was the quarrel between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. So far as the Gentiles were concerned, it had been settled by the meeting in Jerusalem, which had adopted a compromise, for which Peter and James were largely responsible. That decision had been taken to the Christians at Antioch. James, the brother of Jesus, who now seemed to be the leader of the Jerusalem group, explained to Paul that in his absence many Jews had complained that Paul in his journeys and sermons had been destroying the authority of Moses, telling Jewish converts that it was no longer necessary to obey the Jewish law and ritual, and that even circumcision should not be required of their children. James advised Paul to pacify this turbulent element in the church by publicly conforming

to the Jewish law; and there was an immediate and convenient opportunity to do this. For there were four men who had taken a vow not to have their hair cut until a certain date; the date had arrived. Now if Paul would go into the Temple with these men, undergo purification with them, and pay all the necessary expenses for offerings, it would convince the Jews that Paul really had not overthrown the teachings of Moses.

I could wish that Paul had answered defiantly that his enemies were correct in their fears, though wrong in being afraid. I could wish that at that moment Paul had emphatically declared that to a Christian, whether Jew or not, the ritual of the Law, including circumcision, was now of no importance. But Paul thought otherwise, and perhaps he was right not to bring the dispute to a crisis at that time. He followed the diplomatic and conciliatory course recommended by James, went with the men into the temple, and observed all the ritual of purification until the days were accomplished.

One thing is certain. In Paul's epistles he appears bolder, more uncompromising and more free than he does in Luke's account of his behaviour in the book of Acts. Perhaps this is quite natural; a man's own account of his conduct in a dispute is apt to exhibit more boldness than an account written by an observer.

At all events, this compromise did not help him personally with his enemies, which is the usual result

of compromises. Toward the close of the seven days of purification, the Asiatic Jews saw Paul in the temple, stirred up mob sentiment, and laid violent hands on him, crying out that Paul was a seditious agitator, violating the law of Moses, and polluting the temple by bringing Greeks into it. The mob were so excited that they would have killed Paul at once, but it so happened that one of those splendid Roman officers, of whom we hear so much in the New Testament, this time the chief captain of the garrison in Jerusalem, Lysias by name, heard the tremendous uproar; he called out the Roman regulars, and when the Jewish rabble saw the legionaries coming on the double quick, "they left beating of Paul." We may be quite sure they did. They had a wholesome respect for the Roman uniform.

Captain Lysias instantly restored order; he had Paul, who seemed to be the cause of the disturbance, bound in chains, both to keep him from running away, and to protect him from the fury of the multitude. In the characteristically practical Roman fashion, he demanded what Paul *had done,* the identical question asked by Pilate and by Gallio on previous occasions. To this question there was such a confused howling by the mob, which now was in that state of insanity so familiar to observers of crowds, that nothing at all could be learned. Then the Roman captain, like an honest and courageous modern Sheriff, determined to save his pris-

oner from the people, that he might be tried in due process of law. The mob had become so violent that it was necessary for the soldiers to carry Paul bodily up the stairs of the castle; thus he entered, in a manner that might easily have been mistaken for a triumphal procession, if the howls of the following pack for his blood had not been so threatening. Paul immediately asked for an interview with the Roman captain, and when he addressed the latter in Greek, Lysias was much surprised, for he had got it into his head that Paul was an Egyptian agitator who had previously led four thousand desperados. But Paul said proudly, "I am a Jew of Tarsus, a citizen of a large city," and he forthwith desired permission to address the throng. With characteristic Roman tolerance, this was granted. Paul stood on an elevation on the stairway, where he could be seen by the multitude, and when it became apparent that he was about to make a speech, there was something in his attitude that stilled the crowd and filled them with curiosity. The uproar ceased. In the words of Luke, who was present, "there was made a great silence," and at the exact psychological moment, Paul opened his mouth and began speaking in the Aramaic tongue.

When Paul, who had just been conversing with Lysias in fluent Greek, addressed the Jewish throng in Hebrew, "they kept the more silence," and listened to him with eager intensity. He began

by reminding them that if they were Jews, he was a super-Jew:

> I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, *as ye all are this day.*

This diplomatic and conciliatory prologue disarmed opposition to such an extent that he was enabled to deliver an oration without interruption until he used the inflammatory word *Gentiles.* Then the mob burst into a terrific uproar; they were in a frenzy, tearing off their clothes, and throwing dirt into the air, like so many maddened bulls. The captain instantly drew Paul into the castle, and gave orders that he be put to the torture by scourging, that being the fashionable method for ascertaining truth from reluctant witnesses. (It was a method thought to be reasonable until the nineteenth century; now we use the third degree.) But while the soldiers were binding him, Paul asked the centurion boldly if it were lawful to scourge a Roman without hearing him? The thoroughly frightened centurion reported this remark to Captain Lysias, whose bewilderment may be easily pardoned. At first he had thought that his prisoner was an Egyptian agitator; then he was amazed to hear him speaking Greek, following that by an address in Hebrew; and now it appeared that this accomplished linguist was a Roman citizen. *Civis Romanus sum* was the proudest utterance on earth,

and one that commanded immediate respect. "Are you really a Roman?" enquired the commander; "it cost me much money to buy this privilege." And Paul replied haughtily, "But I was born a Roman." The haste with which his examiners left the room is positively ludicrous; they ran at top speed, apparently hoping that Paul would not be able to identify them. The chief captain alone stood his ground, but his perplexity had given way to apprehension, because he had bound a Roman. On the next day, he not only allowed Paul to make another speech, but he made attendance compulsory; he commanded the chief priests and the council to appear, and to listen.

The high priest Ananias had anyhow the courage of his convictions; for no sooner had Paul begun his oration, than this dignitary ordered an attendant to strike Paul on the mouth. Paul, emboldened by his experiences with Lysias, and in a sudden rage at the blow, did not turn the other cheek, but shouted at Ananias, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!" In horror at this insult, several persons cried out in protest, and Paul, who had got control of his temper, replied more tranquilly, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest," a statement that I find it quite impossible to understand.

This apology had a soothing effect; and Paul, a born politician and expert mob-queller, suddenly perceiving that his audience was made up both of

Pharisees and Sadducees, and knowing well enough that the Sadducees did not believe in the future life, diverted attention away from himself by exclaiming that he was a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, and that he had come there to discuss the hope and resurrection of the dead. This was technically true, as he had hoped to talk of the resurrection of Jesus; but the crowd took his speech exactly as he had intended, and burst into civil war, the Pharisees rallying around Paul. Once more the Captain rescued the speaker by armed men, and carried him back into the castle, doubtless hoping that before long he would be relieved of his troublesome presence.

Being informed the next day of a conspiracy against Paul, the Captain sent his prisoner to Governor Felix, with an armed escort of two hundred soldiers, eighty horsemen, and two hundred men with spears. He also wrote a letter that is a model of clarity, truthfulness, dignity, and sincerity. A genuine representative Roman epistle. Governor Felix was enormously impressed by the arrival of Paul, accompanied by the horsemen, and after he had read the letter, he did exactly the right thing. He announced that he would wait until the prisoner's accusers should appear, and then he would hear both them and Paul.

XI

THE CONQUERING CAPTIVE

Trial of Paul before Governor Felix—The Roman Lawyer Tertullus—His Three Accusations—Roman Justice—Two Years of Rest—Felix and Paul—New Trial before Governor Festus—Paul's Sudden Appeal —Reasons for This—Arrival of a King—A Theatrical Occasion—Luke a First-rate Journalist—Opinion of the New York Tribune—Paul's Apologia—Famous and Inexplicable Remark by King Agrippa—What Did He Mean?—Various Translations and Interpretations—A Startling Hymn—Burton Rascoe and Professor Wade—What Luke Wished to Prove—Thrilling Narrative of the Sea—Triumphant Voyage Westward—Another Good Roman—The Storm on the Mediterranean—Paul's Advice to the Captain—Democracy on Shipboard—Perils of the Sea—Paul's Vision—Incidents of Shipwreck—The Escape of Crew and Passengers—The Island of Malta—Gentleness of the Barbarians—Paul and the Viper—Mistakes of the Islanders—A Roman Chieftain—Voyage to Syracuse—The Landing in Italy—Home Among Friends—The League of Nations—Paul in Rome—His Day-long Sermon—Its Results—His Anger Against the Jews—Man and God.

XI

THE CONQUERING CAPTIVE

The Jewish mob, foiled in their attempt at lynching Paul, had been kept in some semblance of order by Captain Lysias; but after Paul had been sent by the latter to Governor Felix, with an armed force ludicrously large for the protection of one man, the Jewish authorities made a deliberate and carefully planned attempt to destroy the apostle. Not only did the high priest Ananias arrive with the elders, but they hired a Roman prosecuting attorney named Tertullus, who skillfully preferred three grave indictments against Paul. Tertullus began his speech by flattering Felix, assuring the governor that any decision he made would commend itself to all. He then said first that Paul was a dangerous agitator and Bolshevik: second, that he was a ringleader of the Christian party: third, that he had profaned the holy temple, and for this third offence would have been already tried and condemned, had not Captain Lysias unwarrantably and brutally snatched him away from his legal judges. This third accusation, despite its effrontery, was cleverly advanced; for whereas in reality Captain Lysias had saved Paul from a lynching mob, in order that the pris-

oners might receive a fair trial, Tertullus put the case in such a manner as to make it appear that the Jewish judges, in the midst of a fair and legal examination, were ruthlessly pushed aside by the violence of Captain Lysias and his armed ruffians. This was not the first nor the last time that a shrewd professional lawyer attempted to turn black into white; it was evidently the object of Tertullus to convince Governor Felix that the Jews were for law and order, even in the trial of a seditious scoundrel, but their honourable intentions had been frustrated by violence. Conscience does not begin to trouble some people like illegality.

No sooner had he finished his speech, which is as remarkable for its brevity as for its plausibility, than all the Jews shouted their assent. Tertullus apparently had earned his fee.

But the governor, like other Roman officials we meet in the New Testament, was willing to hear both sides; and he immediately gave Paul the opportunity to speak in rebuttal. Paul insisted that he believed in the Law and the Prophets, that he was no agitator, had never profaned the Temple, and had simply expressed a faith common to him and to the Pharisees, that there would be a resurrection of the dead.

Felix, much to the disappointment of the priests, deferred judgment until the arrival of Captain Lysias. Thus it was in reality indefinitely postponed, for Lysias never came. We do not know

the reason for his non-appearance; but it is easy to guess. He had seen quite enough of Paul, and he knew that he had seized and come very near to scourging a Roman citizen. He felt safer where he was.

Paul was not allowed to leave the district, but was given every other privilege. A centurion had him in charge, but he was allowed to go about freely, write letters, receive callers, and accept aid from friends. Thus he obtained what he needed more than anything else; complete rest for two years. The centurion was probably a good fellow, and I wish we had a record of the conversations between him and his distinguished prisoner.

The present wife of Felix—he had had others—was Drusilla; and as she was a Jewess, Paul was given an opportunity to explain to the pair his faith in Jesus. Felix was a practical man, and hoped that Paul would eventually offer him downright cash for a ransom; hence he frequently sent for him. But instead of offering him money, Paul told him of the Day of Judgment, when all corrupt officials would have their accounts examined; this made Felix ill at ease, and he said he was too busy to hear any more details. But when Festus was appointed governor in his place, Felix, knowing that the Jews might send to Rome embarrassing descriptions of certain features of his administration, curried favour with them by leaving Paul a prisoner. Possibly Drusilla had something to do with this decision.

Whatever the attitude toward Paul, he was never forgotten by friend or foe. The moment Festus came into power, the Jewish officials asked him to have the apostle brought up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, it being their plan to have him assassinated during the journey. Lysias had provided against this by sending a prodigious convoy; Festus also must have suspected treachery, for he replied curtly that Paul should stay where he was, and that if the priests had any definite accusation of misconduct, they might accompany the governor and his staff to Caesarea, and he would listen in the court of judgment. This invitation was eagerly accepted; a large number went thither and brought all kinds of charges against Paul. Their mistake was in trying to prove too much. They declared that Paul was a political agitator, and guilty of treason against the Roman emperor. On being requested to speak for himself Paul amazed them all by saying, "I appeal unto Caesar."

No one then and no one now knows why he did this. Posibly he meant his appeal to be an indication of how ridiculous was the charge of treason; for surely he would not appeal to the emperor if he had been plotting against him. Possibly he knew that so long as he remained in Palestine, he was in constant danger of assassination. In the last chapter of Acts, he seems to say as much. My opinion is, that he had always wanted to go to Rome, and now saw an opportunity to travel thither in security,

and at the expense of the state. His appeal was granted by Festus, who seems to have been a clear-minded and just ruler; but he was in considerable perplexity as to what kind of a letter he should send to the emperor with Paul, as his prisoner had committed no crime.

While he was thinking about this, King Agrippa and his sister-consort Bernice came to Caesarea on a formal visit of state. Though Agrippa's dominion and power were both inconsiderable, he was after all a king, and was received with the homage due to royalty. He had been educated at Rome, but was familiar with the Jewish law, or at all events, knew much more about it than Festus. The governor therefore had a private audience with the king, and told him of his perplexity with regard to Paul. He put it in such a way that Agrippa really had to see Paul. It is always embarrassing to entertain a king, and it is probable that Felix thought that one afternoon might be agreeably spent by the royal pair in listening to Paul, who, whatever his peculiarities, was an interesting speaker. Agrippa himself was no doubt bored by this visit; and he grasped at any opportunity of entertainment. It would kill a few hours.

The stage was theatrically set for the occasion. Agrippa and Bernice entered in regal grandeur, were placed on an improvised throne, and when the military officers and leading citizens had taken their reserved seats, Paul, the prisoner, and yet the chief

actor in the play, made his entrance, chained to his accompanying Roman soldier. Like the born orator he was, he took full advantage of this splendid opportunity; and the twenty-sixth chapter of Acts contains a remarkable report of his still more remarkable speech.

I say this is a remarkable report; and in confirmation, I appeal to the testimony of a professional journalist. In the *New York Tribune,* 12 August, 1923, Burton Rascoe wrote as follows:

> What has always struck me, as a newspaper man, as being one of the finest bits of reporting to be found anywhere is the account in the Acts of the Apostles of the arrest and trial of Paul. It is a highly dramatic episode, set forth with magnificent literary skill, without a line of "editorial comment." The principal participants in the event are presented in the sharpest outlines, with marvelous economy of means. They are delineated entirely through dialogue and action, without the use of a single descriptive adjective. And while the drama unfolds as a conflict of temporal and spiritual ideas, we get an illuminating study of the contrast between Roman culture and civilization and the culture and civilization of her Semitic provinces during the first century.

Paul's speech before Agrippa is an autobiography. He described his youth and education, and in a thrilling manner—which must have made the scene vivid to his audience—he told of his conversion. Whether they believed in the Light or not, they could not doubt that the speaker believed his own words. But as he began to affirm the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ, the practical non-mystical Roman

mind of Festus balked. He sincerely believed Paul to be insane. He had exactly the attitude toward the prisoner that many a hard-headed business man has toward some enthusiastic unworldly pedant. Perhaps too, he feared that the king was beginning to find this fanatic anything but entertaining; we are always more anxious for our guests than for ourselves; he shouted, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." But Paul, in a calm and quiet voice, and not forgetting the courtesy due to the governor, replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

Then he turned to the king, confidently asked and confidently answered a question (Paul's confidence here is considerably greater than mine). "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

Agrippa made the reply that will continue to puzzle students of the New Testament to the end of time.

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." What on earth did he mean by that? If we could only be "listening in" to this trial by radio, and could hear the actual voice of the king!

I was brought up on the Authorised Version, and had read this passage many times before the Revised Version appeared in 1881. Accordingly I used to believe that Agrippa was so seriously shaken by the eloquence of Paul—as many a sinner was

shaken by D. L. Moody—that he was on the verge of making a confession of faith, becoming a Christian, and joining the church there and then. I am sure many of my readers can remember the hymn and tune written by the famous P. P. Bliss, which, sung in all revival meetings, to an effective melody, literally terrified thousands of people. The hymn was called *Almost Persuaded,* and represented a sinner just on the brink of salvation, and then turning away. The hymn deepened in intensity with each stanza; and I shall never forget the awful solemnity with which the last lines were sung:

"Almost persuaded," harvest is past!
"Almost persuaded," doom comes at last!
"Almost" can not avail;
"Almost" is but to fail!
Sad, sad, that bitter wail—
"Almost—*but lost!*"

But it is nearly inconceivable that a sceptical scoundrel like Agrippa could have been brought to the edge of Christian conversion by Paul, or that even if he had had secret convictions, he would have avowed them in the presence of the Romans and the Jews.

The Revised Version of 1881 spoiled the conversion idea by the translation, "With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian." The word *fain* means *gladly:* the sense being that Agrippa spoke with a tolerant smile, meaning, "Why, Paul, you with just a few words would

gladly turn me too into a Christian." Kent's version reads, "With but little persuasion you would make me a Christian!" Ballantine, in the Riverside New Testament, translates, "With little effort you are persuading me to become a Christian," which leaves the significance of the remark in doubt. The colloquial Dr. Moffatt has it, "At this rate, Agrippa remarked, it won't be long before you believe you have made a Christian out of me."

It is interesting again to get the view of a modern practical journalist on these various translations, so irreconcilable in their import; and Burton Rascoe, who is puzzled like the rest of us, translates them into American slang, in an endeavour to make each version clear to the readers of newspapers. He rather inclines to believe that Moffatt's version comes nearest to the truth, and that Agrippa, so far from being in the least impressed by Paul, dismissed him with ironical contempt.

Professor Wade believes that it is difficult to get any satisfactory meaning out of the Greek text. Perhaps his explanation comes closest to what actually happened: "He parried the question with the bantering remark that Paul was persuading himself that with a small effort he had made him a Christian."

But whether Agrippa spoke seriously or kindly or tolerantly or amusedly or laughingly or contemptuously, Paul's reply, in its conviction and in its courtesy was magnificent.

I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day were . . . such as I am, except these bonds.

The king rose: the session was at an end; and whether Agrippa was or was not convinced that there was anything important in Christianity, he was convinced that Paul had done nothing worthy of imprisonment; which was perhaps all Luke wanted to prove. The narrator had shown repeatedly that in the controversies between Paul and the Jews, they were wrong and he was right. Possibly also Luke was determined to show that the young Christian church was not in any conceivable manner allied with political sedition, however revolutionary its effect might be in the human heart.

Two things seem to prove this: Paul's indignant refutation of all charges of political heresy, and Luke's frequent displays of Roman tolerance and justice. It is not until the book of Revelation that Rome is attacked.

It is difficult to find anywhere a better narrative than Doctor Luke has given us in the last two chapters of Acts. Hardly a word is wasted, and there is no superfluous comment. For a thrilling story of action, one event pressing hard on the heels of another, it is unsurpassed; and those who like sea-stories, including seamanship, storms, and shipwreck, will always read it with keen enjoyment.

Westward the course of empire took its way; and just as the most important event in the Crimean

war—though no one at the time suspected it—was the preservation of a young Russian officer named Tolstoi, so the most significant result of this stormy voyage was the safety of one of the prisoners named Paul. So much more weighty, so much more fraught with consequences to posterity, is the life of an individual than the success or failure of a whole nation. It is not through national greatness or commercial supremacy that comes the advance of civilization; but rather through the thinking mind, or the artistic genuis, or the spiritual power of a single man. Hence the actual casualties of war can never be known.

Shaken rudely by the tempestuous sea, the Christian Church was leaving the place of its origin in Palestine, and travelling toward Rome in the person of Paul. And from that westward voyage, it was destined to spread not only through all Roman civilisation, but eventually across the Atlantic to America.

Paul, with a number of prisoners, all bound to Italy for trial, had the good fortune to be placed in charge of another of those excellent Romans—whom Luke admired so much—a centurion of the emperor's band, named Julius. A ship from Adramyttium, a town on the western coast of Asia Minor, lay in the port of Caesarea, and on this the company embarked. This vessel was not bound for Italy, but would stop at some town, where could be found a ship for the rest of the long voyage, to

which all the passengers could be transferred. Aristarchus, who had been mentioned in the twentieth chapter of Acts, was "with us,"—how fortunate that Luke was on board!

On the next day, sailing north, they reached Sidon. Captain Julius, evidently deeply impressed by Paul —and not dreaming how much more deeply he was soon to be—showed his prisoner every attention, allowing him to go ashore and talk with his Christian friends in Sidon. After taking on cargo they set sail; the natural course would have been south of Cyprus, directly to the southern coast of Pamphylia. But the autumn weather was wild, and the west wind obstinate; so the ship had to go to the east of Cyprus, and get as soon as possible to the coast of the mainland. At Myra they found an Alexandrian ship bound for Italy, to which they transferred, 276 people, including the sailors of the new vessel. The weather was bad from the start, and it took them many days to make the short distance to Cnidus, a town on the southwest tip of Asia Minor. Thence they proceeded south, with the strong wind abeam, going under the island of Crete, rounding Cape Salmone, on the east point of the island. They rounded this not easily and reached the harbour of Fair Havens, on the south shore of Crete. This port did not seem to the ship's captain a good place to spend the winter, though he was earnestly advised to do so by Paul. The fact that a prisoner was allowed to give any advice—even

though it was not taken—is sufficient evidence of the impression made by this time on the soldiers and sailors. Whether Paul understood seamanship or not, no one knows; but he was a traveller of wide experience, and he could not talk on any subject without effect.

Paul probably gave his advice to the captain through the centurion. What sailors at sea think of soldiers on board is well-known; "tell that to the marines." Possibly the captain thought the less of this suggestion coming to him in that manner. There seems to have been a council, and their course settled by a majority vote; no wonder they got into difficulties. For no matter what we may think of the virtues of democracy on land, it is no good at all on the sea. If the world is not safe for democracy, democracy has never been safe for those who are in danger.

At this moment there came a gentle south wind; and the ship started, with the intention of creeping along the south shore of the island, and making the port of Phoenix, on the southwestern corner. But they never saw this harbour, because a violent wind arose off the land, called Euroclydon or Euraquilo; this quickly became a gale. In vain they tried to sail close-hauled back to the island; there was nothing for it but to come about and run before the wind. They managed to get under the lee of a tiny island. There they succeeded, though with much trouble (everybody helping) to make secure the small

boat. Then they undergirded the ship with stout ropes—did sailors swim under the keel, or how did they accomplish this? "They used helps," something like a windlass, to make these ropes fast.

The north shore of Africa is marked by quicksands, the Syrtis; there was danger, in this hurricane, that they might be driven thither. Accordingly they let down the sails, and scudded under bare poles. The ship wallowed badly, and was in danger of foundering; hence they jettisoned some of the cargo, and threw out even the tackling. The horrible weather held; the sky was overcast day and night so that it was impossible for the captain to find out the ship's position. The sailors became desperate.

Then Paul, who had had a vision one night, came forward and spoke reassuringly. Human as he was, he could not forbear saying, "I told you so"; he reminded them that their misfortunes came from not following his advice. But now he was certain they would all be saved. Fourteen nights the ship was buffeted hither and thither on the Adriatic (probably the Ionian) Sea. At last hearing the fearful sound of breakers, they cast the lead and discovered less and less depth. This looked like a terrible termination to a terrible voyage; and no one can read Luke's account without sharing the men's emotions: "they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day." That last night was the worst of all.

Some of the more treacherous sailors were planning to take to the boat, and had already lowered her from the davits; but Paul spoke to the soldiers, who, having faith only in him, cut the ropes, and the little boat fell away in the sea. At daybreak Paul gave them excellent advice, urging them to eat, in order to preserve their strength. He set a good example, taking bread in his hands, saying grace as though he were securely at home, and eating with cheerfulness. They ate and felt much better. Then they cast out the cargo of wheat into the sea, lightening the ship; and seeing in the whitening dawn a little creek on this strange coast, they took up the anchors, unlashed the helm, hoisted up sail, and steered straight for the shore.

They drove the ship head on into a sandy place where there was a little estuary; the stem stuck fast, and the floating stern was driven to and fro by the waves, like a dog wagging his tail. Had not Paul been aboard, the prisoners would now have lost their lives; for the soldiers, knowing that they were responsible for their captives, and fearing they would escape, advised killing them. But the centurion, admiring Paul, would not hear to this, but advised those who could swim to leap into the sea, and the others to get hold of pieces of wood, and trust to the rolling breakers. So they all, in one way or another, half-famished and half-drowned, weary with the interminable days and nights of tempest,

found to their exceeding joy, the firm land under their feet.

The island was Malta, south of Sicily. The "barbarous" people, as Luke calls them, showed every sign of kindness and hospitality, kindling a fire and warming them, for they had escaped from the wetness of the sea into the wetness of a cold, driving rain. Luke was both pleased and surprised by the hospitality of these savage islanders; but Benjamin Franklin, in his remarks on the North American Indians, said, "It is remarkable that in all Ages and Countries Hospitality has been allow'd as the Virtue to those whom the civiliz'd were pleased to call Barbarians." He then adduces as one illustration the way St. Paul and his shipwrecked companions were received at Malta.

There were still adventures. As Paul was helping in building and adding to the fire, a viper, warmed by the sudden heat, bit him on the hand, and the natives expected to see him go into convulsions and die. He shook off the beast, and to their amazement seemed to feel no ill effects. Some would explain this today by saying that after all, the reptile probably was not poisonous; others, believers in auto-suggestion, would say that because Paul did not entertain the idea of fear, he kept the poison out of his system. But whatever the explanation, the affair made a tremendous impression on the barbarians. First they thought he was a criminal whose sin had found him out; then they thought he

was a god. Wrong, both times, but not more mistaken than nearly all human estimates of strangers.

There was a Roman chieftain on the island named Publius. Finding that Paul and Doctor Luke were cultivated men, he entertanied them three days at his house, and must have enjoyed their conversation; but he was to enjoy their skill even more, for his father was very ill, and Paul cured him.

The ship's company wintered on the island, remaining there three months, receiving the best of treatment from the inhabitants, and many gifts on their departure. These "barbarous" people should always be held in grateful remembrance. I am sure Luke and Paul never forgot them, and often discussed that memorable winter.

Another Alexandrian ship, with the images of Castor and Pollux on her bows, had spent months there in the harbour. On her they sailed to Syracuse in Sicily. After a stay of three days, they departed for the mainland of Italy; but the wind again being contrary, they had to beat up and tack, and it was some time before they reached Rhegium. Soon a favourable south wind came, and the ships advanced easily up the west coast and the long voyage, made on three ships, terminated one Spring day at Puteoli. Here was a Christian church, and the members were so delighted at the sight of Paul, they begged him to spend a week with them. The centurion granted this favour. He must himself have

been sorry to part with Paul. Shipwreck makes friendships.

As the party drew near to Rome, Christians came out to meet them and escorted them over the last stage from Appü Forum and The Three Taverns (see the poem by E. A. Robinson). After all, in coming to Rome, he came to his friends; wherever there was a Christian community, there was home. This is as it should be today; Christian churches, Catholic and Protestant, should form a union stronger than any national ties. The real league of nations should be found in Christian people.

The centurion delivered up all his prisoners, not one having been lost; but Paul was granted special favours. He lived two years in his own hired house, accompanied of course by one Roman soldier, who I dare say was not an unpleasant companion. He received callers every day, who were eager to talk with him and learn of the new religion.

As happened elsewhere, he first made his appeal to the Jews, to whom he explained his danger in Palestine, his appeal to Caesar, and his loyalty to Jewish law and custom. He wished to prove to them that Christianity was not against the Old Testament, but simply a fulfillment of its prophecies, evidently with the hope that they would embrace the Gospel. Much to his surprise they told him they had received no letters from the Jews at Jerusalem, and that the new Christian sect had no social standing in Rome; on the contrary, it was denounced on

all sides. Still, they were willing to hear anything he had to say. Accordingly a day was appointed; crowds of Jews came to his house in the early morning, and he spoke to them all day long, referring to chapter and verse in the Old Testament, doing his best to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah.

The result, as succinctly stated by Luke, was what might have been expected: "some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not."

I do not know how much Paul had expected; but he was evidently disappointed with the result of his day's oratory; for he condemned them with the words of the prophet Isaiah, and announced that the salvation of God would be sent to the Gentiles, who would receive it gladly. To the credit of the Jews, they seem to have borne no resentment against Paul for his harsh rebuke with which he ended the day. They went off together, arguing, and spent many days in controversy among themselves.

Christianity was received on that memorable day as it is received everywhere now; some believe and some do not. But it is heartening to look back and see its growth from that time. Little did the emperor and the haughty politicians and the proud soldiers in the streets know that the Gospel preached by a prisoner in chains would be increasing, centuries after their empire had vanished away.

Paul is the greatest human figure in the history of Christianity. And how interesting it is to compare

him with his Master! Although Paul was an evangelist who combined wisdom, learning, diplomacy, foresight, together with inspiration, he was wholly and completely human. No one except idolaters and ignorant barbarians ever believed he was divine; his character, mind, and temperament were exclusively human. So were his faults, of which he had an abundance. But when, in imagination, we place beside Paul, with all his genius, the figure of our Lord Jesus Christ, the difference is as striking as it would be if the Master were in some form quite other than human. Paul was a man, just that, just unmistakably that, and nothing more. But of all beings of whom we have any record in the history of this world, Jesus is the only one who seems divine. And as Shakespeare always seems greater when we place alongside the greatest of his contemporaries, so when we place Paul near his Master, we seem to be the witnesses of an immediate Transfiguration.

XII

LOVE-LETTERS AND ROMANCE

The Fourth Gospel and the Three Letters—The World's Spiritual Masterpiece—Light, Life, Love—The Best Ritual—The Highest Wisdom—A Teacher and His Favourite Pupil—A Poem by Browning—Scholars and the Fourth Gospel—Science and Spirit—Professor Torrey's Investigations—Was the Fourth Gospel Originally Written in Aramaic?—An Explanation of a Difficult Text—A New Atmosphere—Difference Between John and the Other Three—Practical Morals and the Incarnation—The Motor of the Universe—The Essence of Religion—The Three Letters—Footnotes to the Gospel—Applications of Philosophy—The Love of the World—The Elect Lady—Civil War in the Church—Realism and Romanticism—Experiences and Dreams—Mathematics and Revelation—Identification of the Beast—The Millerites—Literary Style of the Revelation—Patriotism and Religion—Persecution and its Good Effects—Two Objects—The Seven Letters to the Seven Churches—The Laodiceans—A Famous Novel—A Dramatic Climax—The Seven-Headed Beast—The Decisive Battle—The Veteran of Heaven—The Millennium—The Serene Close—The Free Gift.

XII

LOVE-LETTERS AND ROMANCE

The Fourth Gospel and the Three Letters are anonymous; but it is clear that the same man wrote them all. For nearly a hundred years many investigators and their more uncritical followers have viewed the Fourth Gospel with suspicion; it has not received anything like the intellectual respect given to the Gospel of Mark. Yet, omitting for the moment questions of historical accuracy, authorship and date, the Fourth Gospel is not only the spiritual masterpiece of the world's literature, it is closer to the core of truth than any other part of the Bible. If I were allowed to retain only one book, it would be this.

The author is particularly fond of three words—Light, Life, Love. The greatest of these is Love. The chief reason for the appearance of Jesus on earth was to reveal to humanity, groping in the darkness, the illuminating idea that God is Love. Of all forms of worship—and there are many—the most beautiful and the most fruitful is to love our fellow-creatures, even as God loves us. Thus Love becomes not only the central truth in the universe, but in loving others we are in reality doing homage

to the Universal Spirit. It is the highest and most perfect ritual.

Whoever has learned that Love should be the guide of thought and conduct, is truly wise; whoever has not yet grasped this idea, has missed the most important fact within the range of human perception. Now the Fourth Gospel and the Three Letters insist on the primacy of love, and thus these documents are closer to the teaching of Jesus than any others. Why was it that this writer was the one "whom Jesus loved"? Was it because of his extreme youth? We do not know how old he was. Because of his beauty? We know nothing of his personal appearance. Because of the sweetness of his disposition? There again we are ignorant.

Jesus was a Teacher. A teacher, whether he be a teacher of mathematics, music, military tactics, chemistry, or literature, cannot help being drawn to a pupil who instantly perceives the ideas that are stressed as most important. A teacher, like everybody else, wishes to be understood by those whom he is addressing; he dislikes indifference, ignorance, and above all, misrepresentation. It is difficult not to show favouritism to a pupil who not only exhibits deep interest and enthusiasm, but what is much better, complete understanding. In such a case, teacher and pupil are kindred spirits.

I believe that of all the disciples, the author of the Fourth Gospel was the one who was closest to the mind of Jesus, who grasped his thought most

easily and yet most firmly, who understood without obstacles the inmost significance of the revelation. This is why Jesus loved him in particular.

I counsel all readers of the New Testament to study with care Browning's poem, *A Death in the Desert*. The Apostle John is the only living person who has seen the Lord; he is about to die; when he departs, there will be no one on earth who saw the figure of Jesus and heard his voice. John looks forward into the centuries of faith and scepticism, and he says:

> For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
> And hope and fear,—believe the aged friend,—
> Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
> How love might be, hath been indeed, and is;
> And that we hold thenceforth to the uttermost
> Such prize despite the envy of the world,
> And, having gained truth, keep truth: that is all.

It is more important for a human being to learn this than to have any other knowledge, accomplishment, power, or good fortune.

It is with peculiar delight that I see modern scholarship giving steadily more homage to the Gospel of John. But let me emphatically repeat what I said in the first essay in this series—no matter what the attitude of scholarship toward the Gospel may be, nothing can change the stupendous and all important fact that we have it. Somebody wrote it at some time; questions of its date and authorship do not begin to be so impressive as the Thing Itself. There it is!

Yet when I remember how scholars used to say that the Gospel of John was written by somebody toward the close of the second century, and when today there are first-rate scholars who believe it was written before the year 75, *and in Palestine,* and by some one who knew personally him whom it describes, I feel like cheering! It confirms me in what I have always maintained: never to give up a spiritual truth because of any alleged discovery of science. Wait, anyhow, until the scientific statement has been verified. Else one may lose one's divine birthright and get not even a mess of pottage.

I have been reading with interest an article in the *Harvard Theological Review,* Oct., 1923, by Professor Charles C. Torrey, called *The Aramaic Origin of the Gospel of John.* He believes that the Fourth Gospel was written originally in Aramaic, presumably in Palestine, and by one who was very close to our Lord. Let me quote a few passages:

> Our evangelist's great contribution was his intimate mystical interpretation of the person of the Messiah and of the revelation given through him, an interpretation such as no other gave or—we may say with confidence—could have given.
>
> It is misleading to speak of the "dogmatic development" in John in such a way as to imply that it marks a necessarily *later stage* than that represented by the Synoptists. What we see is the profound experience of a man, not by any means that of a church; it is the advance made possible by a great soul, not by a series of years.
>
> How could any one read the four gospels thoughtfully without seeing that the author of John was a *"disciple* of the Lord" in a sense in which the phrase could not possibly be

applied to any one of the other three evangelists? On every page there is exhibited an intimacy with the thought of the Master which is not even approached elsewhere.

These are heartening words; and they come, be it remembered, not from a devotional writer, but from a profound and scrupulously accurate scholar.

Finally, as the last verse of the fourteenth chapter has never previously been satisfactorily explained, let me give from this same article Professor Torrey's interesting interpretation.

The closing words of this verse, "Arise, let us go hence," furnish perhaps the most perplexing problem in the book. No one arises, no one goes out; no further notice is taken of the summons, either by the Master himself or by his disciples. The discourse continues through three long chapters. . . . The leading theme of chapter 14 is the announcement, *I must leave you and go hence.* Then follows chapter 15, with the theme, *Nevertheless, abide in me.* The one is the necessary continuation of the other. . . .

The immediate context makes the suggestion plausible that in vs. 31 Jesus was giving this first division of his discourse a suitable close by saying that the necessity laid upon him, of "departing hence" (the main subject of the chapter), was in order that the world might know that he was the divine Son, fulfilling his Father's mission. . . . Nowhere is the expression of the idea more in place than here in 14, 31. I would conjecture the following as the original reading, beginning with vs. 30: *"I will no longer speak much with you, . . .* but in order that the world may know that I love the Father, and that as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do, *I will arise and go hence."*

Everyone notices how unlike the first chapter of John is to the opening words of the other three evangelists. We are at once in a different atmosphere. I may state it best by saying that it is the difference between things and thoughts, between facts and ideas. Only remember that while not every fact is an idea, every idea is a fact. Matthew, Mark and Luke give us the facts concerning the appearance of Jesus, John gives us the reason for it. John is the only one who mentions Nicodemus, who in the night received a greater illumination than from the sun at midday. To believe is to see the Light; to see the Light is to have Life; and to live abundantly is to love.

The moral teachings of Jesus, as expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, are of high importance. Nevertheless, even if we did not possess the practical directions of our Lord, we should still know from other sources that unselfishness is better than selfishness. More important than the Manual of Living dictated by Jesus is the idea of his Incarnation. He did not come into the world merely or even mainly to tell us how to behave; he came to reveal his Oneness with the Father, and his Oneness with those who follow him. He is the revelation that God is Love, even as the brightness of the moon proves that the sun is shining. It is in the Fourth Gospel that this idea is made paramount. The mystical union of Christ with God leads to the

mystical union of Jesus with all those who love him. I am the vine, ye are the branches.

Thus he entered the world not merely to show us how to live, but to give us such a reason for faith in living, that we may all have abundance of life.

When John wrote, *God is Love,* he was not trying to say something sentimental. He was stating the supreme philosophical principle, that God and Love are identical. The motor of the universe is Love.

To merely practical moralists, the Gospel of John seems inferior to the other three; but to those who are deeply and truly spiritually minded, to whom the essence of religion is something more than a guidebook, who wish a foundation for life as well as for conduct, the Gospel of John is at once the most profound and the most lofty of all the books in the world.

The three letters of John reinforce and apply his Gospel. The first letter begins as abruptly as the Gospel, and ends with a warning against idolatry, which would seem to imply that it was written mainly for the Gentiles. There is no opening salutation as in Paul's epistles, and no farewell. The philosophical doctrine of the Gospel, that the word made flesh revealed the God of Love, is here put in simpler and plainer language, apparently to show how this metaphysical idea should be applied in the art of living. The same claim of personal knowledge of Jesus is made as was made in the Fourth

Gospel, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled."

Two things are stressed, first, the divinity of Christ, second, the proof that we are Christians. What is this proof? It is that we love our fellowmen.

> We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.
>
> Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.

Thus John followed his Master in dealing with the sources of conduct.

There is one passage that presumably has led to much asceticism, where I am sure we should follow the spirit rather than the letter.

> Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For my part, I certainly love the world. I love the mountains and the sea, I love Spring dawns and Winter sunsets, I love the rivers and the valleys, and the green fields. Surely the apostle did not mean that we should not love the world, or love life, but that we should not put what is secondary above what is primary. The love of God, the supreme artist of beauty, the love of truth and honour, the love of righteousness come before our love of material things. Let us love the world and

the people in it with sincere devotion, but let us not love things which are transitory more than things which are eternal. The world passes away, but the truth is immortal.

The second letter of John is addressed to the "elect lady," which I used to think was some deaconess. Really by the elect lady he means some church, for the epistle is evidently addressed to a number of persons in some Christian community. The personal touch in the twelfth verse is interesting. The author is planning shortly to visit this church, hence the extreme brevity of what is written. Conversation will be much more satisfactory to both parties. The object in writing is to warn them against teachers who deny the divinity of Christ.

The third letter is addressed directly to a man named Gaius, of whom we know little. But he must have been a member of the church to which the second letter was addressed, as is clear from the specific references, which make this epistle exceedingly vivid. He expects shortly to see Gaius face to face, and in the meanwhile he commends him and Demetrius, and condemns an ambitious busybody named Diotrephes.

I call these three letters Love-Letters, because they emphasise so strongly the central idea of Love.

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

This being so, there should never be hatred or hostility between any members of any organisations of Christ's followers. Catholics and Protestants should regard each other with sincere affection and admiration, and individual church members should never let the sun go down on their wrath. As "the whole world lieth in wickedness," let us not make the irreparable error of promoting civil war among followers of Christ.

If one reads a few pages in the Gospel of Mark, and then turns abruptly to the Book of Revelation, one experiences a change in style and atmosphere so complete that from the literary point of view it may be called a change from stark realism to the wildest romanticism. Open at random, and see for yourself:

> And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.
>
> And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

> His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;
>
> And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.
>
> And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

The former is what the witness saw: the latter is

an apparition. The former is a description of actuality; the latter is a dream.

The best way to enjoy reading Revelation is to read it as a magnificent Romance; the very height of romantic literature, full of action, full of colour, full of horror, full of splendour, ending in celestial serenity.

There are many wrong ways to read it, of which the worst is the mathematical; by which I mean the attempt to calculate the date of the end of the world, the millennium, or the second coming of Christ, by juggling with figures. The book of Daniel and the Apocalypse have sent many earnest seekers after truth into the madhouse; and the desire to reinforce one's prejudices against some person, some nation, or some church by identification with a monster in the text has changed the Revelation of St. John the Divine into a revelation of one's own stupidity. Thus many Protestants in former times loved to believe that this book was a tract written against the Catholic Church; in the early years of the nineteenth century, the Beast was (outside of France) quite generally identified with Napoleon Bonaparte; in the early years of the twentieth century the Beast became (outside of the Central Powers) the German Emperor. I do not know who the next candidate will be; but as a means of strengthening one's hatreds by the confirmation of Holy Writ, and at the same time increasing the

unction of self-righteousness, the allegory is too convenient ever to become obsolete.

There are historical allusions in the Apocalypse; but they deal with contemporary places and current events.

The famous Millerite delusion of 1843 is an illustration of how the Bible, which ought to inspire man with faith in God, love of his fellows, and zeal for righteousness may, by a false method, contribute to the folly and misery of mankind. For folly is usually followed by misery. The symbolism of the Revelation was too much for Miller's sanity. That way madness lies.

The author of Revelation states his name plainly enough—John; but whether this is the disciple whom Jesus loved and the author of the Gospel and Epistles, I leave to those who are competent to express an opinion. The subject-matter, apart from the Divine Hero, is startlingly different; the literary style is not reminiscent of the Gospel, as the Epistles are; but if the Greek is linguistically, syntactically and grammatically inferior to the Greek of the Fourth Gospel, the author was, despite any such surface blemishes, a poet of the first magnitude. The glorious poetry of the Revelation, in its imagination, passion, sense of form and colour, and above all, in its transporting power, meets the severest tests triumphantly. The author was not only a poet, he was a dramatist; his feeling for con-

flict and for climax seems both instinctive and accurate.

In comparison wtih the book of Acts and with the Epistles of Paul and Peter, there is an amazing change in the attitude toward the Roman Empire. Our Lord did not apparently concern himself with politics; his kingdom was not of this world. But all through the book of Acts Luke not only represents Paul as untainted by political sedition, he represents the Roman authorities as men of fairness, impartiality, and tolerance; had it not been for them, Paul's life would not have been worth a pin. It is clear from a reading of Paul's letters that he believed in good citizenship, and obedience to the civic authorities so far as was possible. "Fear God. Honour the King," wrote Peter in his first epistle. There was then apparently nothing inconsistent in both Christian worship and homage to Rome.

In the Revelation the political world-power, the Roman Empire, is held up to detestation, is attacked with unsurpassable bitterness. The reason for this is perhaps twofold. It had become obligatory not merely to pay tribute unto Caesar, but to worship him; and while this recognition of the emperor as the supreme divinity had constituted political orthodoxy since the time of Augustus, the Roman rulers had been wise enough not to insist upon it. But later in the first century an attempt was made to enforce it throughout the Asiatic dominions of the empire. I can see in Europe the subtle and sceptical Athenians

ironically acquiescing; but the Christians in Asia were made of sterner stuff. Even as Daniel defied royal authority when it conflicted with his conscience, the early Christians refused to worship Caesar. Thus it became exceedingly dangerous to be a Christian; thus persecutions of Christians raged with extreme violence; and thus happened what always happens; instead of terrifying the Christians by torture and murder, their independence became stiffened. (Perhaps the Christian church in the future will be assisted by political or social opposition). As one in the later days of the first century could be a Christian only at the risk of his livelihood, health, and existence, so the church grew in conviction and in hardihood.

The author of the Revelation appears to have had, among others, two objects in view; to strengthen the faith of Christians under persecution, and to comfort them by the assurance that the Roman empire was transitory.

One today can plainly see through the terrific language of denunciation hurled against the civic authorities and the central political power, the sturdy faith of Christians, its flame spreading and brightening under persecution. They, at all events, when it came to an absolute irreconcilable conflict between patriotism and religion, knew which to choose.

The book (written on the Isle of Patmos, a deso-

late island some thirty miles in circumference, in the Aegean Sea, southwest of Samos) after a statement of its author's divine credentials, begins with seven short letters to the seven churches in Asia. He praises, with reservations, Ephesus: Smyrna is commended and counselled to stand fast under imminent persecution: Pergamos is warned against false doctrine: Thyatira is blessed, but also condemned for its tolerance of immorality: Sardis has only a few members who are trustworthy. Philadelphia is the best of the seven: but the most famous of these admirable pastoral letters is the last, the one sent to the church at Laodicea. These people were in John's eyes the worst of all, because they were neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm; and they were plainly told that not even God can digest a Laodicean. In contrast with the heroic, uncompromising, aggressive attitude of the genuine Christian, John says, "I would thou wert cold or hot." He despises them for their neutrality, and for their complacency and self-satisfaction.

> Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

Doubtless they thought that every day in every way they were growing better and better. It was their smugness that infuriated the pastor.

In writing this brief epistle, he added a permanent epithet to the world's literature; everyone recognises

a Laodicean, and a great artist of modern times used the word as a title for a novel.

Then follow chapters containing visions, as impressive as a vivid dream. The four horsemen of the Apocalypse appear; climax is piled on climax, ending with the wreck of the universe.

> There was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;
>
> And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.
>
> And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.
>
> And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;
>
> And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

Later comes a vision of the beast with seven heads and ten horns, who made war upon the saints of God, but who received homage from the citizens of the world. Those who worship him are those whose names are not written in the book of life, referring of course to those who gave adoration to the Roman Emperor.

Then came the supreme battle for domination between Christ and the beast. It is the apotheosis of the Man of Galilee. The new champion's eyes

were as a flame of fire. On his head were many crowns, and he had a name that no man knew. But he was called *The Word of God,* and on his thigh was written KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Innumerable works of pictorial, musical and poetic art have been inspired by this immortal picture of battle: I may cite here the splendid poem of Francis Thompson, for it represents the very spirit of the Apocalypse.

THE VETERAN OF HEAVEN

O Captain of the wars, whence won Ye so great scars?
In what fight did Ye smite, and what manner was the foe?
Was it on a day of rout they compassed Thee about,
Or gat Ye these adornings when Ye wrought their overthrow?

"'Twas on a day of rout they girded Me about,
They wounded all My brow, and they smote Me through the side:
My hand held no sword when I met their armed horde,
And the conqueror fell down, and the conquered bruised his pride."

What is this, unheard before, that the unarmed make war,
And the slain hath the gain, and the victor hath the rout?
What wars, then, are these, and what the enemies,
Strange Chief, with the scars of the conquest trenched about?

"The Prince I drave forth held the Mount of the North,
Girt with the guards of flame that roll round the pole.

I drave him with My wars from all his fortress-stars,
And the sea of death divided that My march might strike its goal.

"In the keep of Northern Guard, many a great daemonian sword
Burns as it turns round the Mount, occult, apart:
There is given him power and place still for some certain days,
And his Name would turn the Sun's blood back upon its heart."

What is THY Name? O show!—"My Name ye may not know;
'Tis a going forth with banners, and a baring of much swords:
But my titles that are high, are they not upon my thigh?
'King of Kings!' are the words, 'Lord of Lords';
It is written 'King of Kings, Lord of Lords.'"

Following the picture of the decisive battle came the vision of a thousand years in a world with Satan powerless in prison. This vision has unfortunately produced an immense amount of fruitless controversy, between those who style themselves Premillennialists and Postmillennialists. The best solution of this controversy may be found in the words of the American naturalist Thoreau. In the course of a public address, he said, "There's a good time coming!" A heckler sarcastically queried, "Can you fix the date?" Thoreau replied, "Will you help it along?"

After all the violence of nature and man, after all the earth-shaking combats between God and

Apollyon, the book ends with a serene vision of paradise, like a lovely pastoral idyl closing a drama of blood. The river of life, with water clear as crystal, flows between the trees of life, and the healing stream is free to every one who has the will therein to quench his thirst.

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